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THE

WOODMAN'S TALE,

AFTER THE MANNER OF SPENSER.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OTHER POEMS,

CHIEFLY NARRATIVE AND LYRIC,

AND

THE ROYAL MESSAGE,

A DRAMA,

BY THE REV. HENRY BOYD, A.M.

TRANSLATOR OF THE DIVINA COMEDIA OF DANTE.

VICAR OF DRUMGATH IN IRELAND,

And Chaplain to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Charleville.

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TO THE MOST NOBLE

THE

MARCHIONESS OF DOWNSHIRE.

MADAM,

It might seem arrogance in me, or the result of a design, too often imputed to dedicators, to prefix your Ladyship's name, though by permission, to those trifles, had not the circumstances that led to it, gave it a distinction from common addresses of this sort, that precludes at least the idea of flattery. When your Ladyship selected my homely tribute to the memory of the late Marquis of Downshire, from others written on the occasion, and bestowed on me an elegant and valuable present, rendered more valuable by the letter which accompanied it, a present which, besides the honour conferred on me, will convey to posterity a lasting evidence of conjugal attachment and piety, I longed for an opportunity of giving some public testimony of my respect and gratitude. I wish, what I here present to your Ladyship, was more worthy of your notice. That it has been honoured by your Ladyship's acceptance, is a mark of condescension, which shall ever be acknowledged with gratitude by,

Madam,

Your most respectful

Humble Servant,

London, July 19th, 1805.

HENRY BOYD.

PREFACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the present indulgence of the public for attempts of the following kind, yet I am convinced that for none is an apology more necessary, than for these that are now submitted to its judgment. Perhaps it will be no excuse that they were written as relaxations in the intervals of professional employment, and that they occupied no more of my time, than is usually given to common amusements, for which I had little or no taste.

It may probably be objected (if these trifles are not below criticism) that too many of these pages are devoted to the sentiments of private friendship, or to delineate the characters of some individuals of my acquaintance, with a *favourable* pencil. Obscure and humble as my station has been, and still continues, I have been honoured with the acquaintance of several deserving of higher praise than I can bestow, in those departments of society, which it has been the fashion of sophistical and fanatic libellers to assail with indiscriminate obloquy; I mean the clergy, and those in the higher ranks of life. Many others could have been selected, if their modesty had allowed such an exhibition, or if such commendation as mine could have added any thing to their characters. With regard to the propriety of occasional panegyric, when merited, I might avail myself of the authority of the Younger Pliny, a competent judge, it will be allowed, of the RULES of the COURT of Parnassus. "The praise, says he, of individuals, or of states, has been sanctioned by immemorial usage; but, when a neglect of laudable attainments indicated a contempt of praise, the effect ceased of

course, and panegyric was no more."* But indeed all writers, Christian and Pagan, who desire us to follow *things of good report*, at least imply, that praise is an useful stimulative to virtue, and there is nothing in the nature of things that renders it incongruous to add the ornaments of numbers and imagery.

With regard to some ancient and modern panegyrists, if Horace had only celebrated the virtues of Proculeius, and had Statius been content to commemorate the birth-day of Lucan, there would have been no imputation on the sincerity of either. Dryden indeed often prostituted his genius, but that is no imputation on Prior and Akenside, when the one wrote his address to Sherlock, and the other to Hoadly. It is no affected humility that makes me shrink from a comparison with them, unless in this one point of resemblance, a warm attachment to real merit.

Were it necessary, in my vindication, "to call up spirits from the vasty deep," I could appeal to the venerable shade of Virgil himself, who has exhibited in his Elysium, in one august assembly, such characters and such virtues as I have endeavoured to delineate; characters, in him, ideal, as was the scene in which they are represented. Not so these; for to them who know the living, or were acquainted with such as are removed to another state of existence, the lively images of each, as delineated in the following verses, will appear in their genuine colours.

> Quique sacerdotes casti——
> Quique pii vates, et Phœbo digna locuti,
> Inventas qui vitam excoluere per artes
> Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.

* Plin. Ep. L. 3, Ep. 21.

THE

WOODMAN'S TALE,

AFTER THE MANNER OF SPENSER.

AVIA PIERIDUM PERAGRO LOCA. *Lucretius.*

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

Some dreadful examples of the effects, which owed their origin to intemperance, induced me, many years ago, to give a rude delineation of this pernicious habit and its cause in the dress of allegory. To mention the author of the Fairy Queen, as my prototype, will only, I am afraid, be an addition to this memorial of my presumption and disgrace. I could, however, mention the names of *some* who rank very high indeed in the literary world, to whose inspection the manuscript was submitted, and by whose approbation I was induced to send it abroad; but I scruple to involve their names in the consequences of my temerity, till it be sanctioned or condemned by the decision of the public. Some credit, I hope, will be allowed to the intention of the following rhapsody, which had long lain neglected among my papers, for, when I wrote it, I lived in a retired country place, with scarce any connection with the literary world, or any friend of whose critical assistance I could then avail myself. Hence it was not only long neglected, but absolutely forgotten, and I have reason to apprehend, that its many imperfections will accelerate its departure to the land of oblivion once more.—Yet even if by good chance it should travel

——————To ape and monkey climes,
With Dunton's prose, or Ward's forgotten rhymes.

and fall into the hands of some individuals whom it might induce to pause, and reflect on the consequences of intemperance, before the habit is confirmed, I should hope my juvenile hours had not been entirely mispent.

I shall prefix a few observations for the sake of those who are not in the habit of perusing more elaborate treatises. It is easy to enumerate the different incentives to this degrading habit; such as the call of pleasure, the social habit, the consolation given to the tipler after the oppression of business, or under the burden of misfortune and care, till the habit is confirmed past all rational hope of change. It is unnecessary to dwell on a definition of drunkenness, farther than to mention that sometimes it produces what physicians denominate COMATOSE affections, temporary disposition to apoplexy, and often a state resembling paralysis, where the mind retains its powers, while the bodily functions are impaired. Mental derangement, during the period of intoxication, is another of its effects, and all are so common, that they must have fallen under the observation of the most negligent. These are all, while they last, species of malady, the tendency to which is increased by every repetition of excess, and probably still more by the seeming moderation of those who, in their daily draught, keep just within the limits of inebriation; but when this bound is past, the first effect is stimulant and exciting, calling forth vigour of body and mind, pleasurable sensation, and often power of intellect; the next is loss of voluntary motion and delirium; the last, a state of debility, from an inordinate action of the several functions. ALCOHOL, or pure spirit, is properly that which the Arabians obtained from wine, but is a name now given to all spirit acquired by fermentation, from substances which contain the saccharine principle, and is reckoned by physicians among the *narcotics*, or those sub-

stances which, by their operation on the animal frame, have a tendency to induce sleep or stupor, or suspend sense and motion. It makes very little difference in this case, whether this be caused by a primary *exciting* power, by which the spirits are wasted, and stupor induced, or by operating immediately as a sedative; as, in either case, the animal economy must suffer a material injury, less dreaded, but in reality more formidable, as it takes place by imperceptible degrees. The gastric juices, or those which operate on the aliment in digestion, are very powerful, when suffered to complete their process undisturbed, but it is easier to conceive than to ascertain how much they may be impeded in their office by the superadded fermentation of vinous liquors taken to excess, and when we are told of their wonderful power in the dissolution of substances, it would appear that they want very *little assistance indeed* from the operation of alcohol, in any of its forms.

The necessity of adding *much* fermented or spirituous stimulant to that of the aliments on which we subsist, appears to me rather doubtful, from the reasons mentioned, and, as the assistance to the general circulation of the blood and lymphatic juices, which is supposed to be afforded by this succedaneum, it seems still less certain, as less needful, when we consider the admirable contrivance of nature for that purpose, illustrated, if not discovered, by the late Dr. Crawford, in his Treatise on Animal Heat. The heat of the blood compared with that of the nourishment which we receive, shews, by the great excess of the former, that it must be derived from another source than from the food we consume; this, according to him, can only be from the external air, which, being decomposed in the lungs, gives out its latent heat, and

communicates to the blood those qualities, by which it appears how much health, digestion, and a good circulation are connected together, and how far they all are promoted by exercise in good air; if it be said that the aliments, in the process of digestion, give out more heat, which was before latent, than enters into Dr. Crawford's calculation, still this shews, that *less* additional stimulant or calorique is necessary for the purpose, than is commonly imagined.* The effect of alcohol upon animal solids is known to be constringent, and that it suspends their progress towards putrefaction, when separated from the body. In this respect, its operation is directly contrary to that of a menstruum or digester; it coagulates the serum of the blood, and most of the secreted fluids, it deoxygenates or separates the vital air from the blood, by which its florid tint is lost, and, in habitual drunkards, the arterial blood becomes of a dark venous colour, except the eruptions on the face, which acquire a florid hue from the atmosphere, from which they are only separated by a thin cuticle.

I must refer the reader to Dr. Trotter's book on Intemperance, for his observations on the component parts of alcohol; the great quantity of hydrogen or inflammable air which it contains; the singular phenomenon of an habitual drunkard's breath taking fire by the application of a candle from the predominance of this ingredient, and the probability of the vast consumption of vital air in such cases, and the mischief to which this must give cause. He illustrates the latter by the information given by Mr. Spalding, the celebrated diver, who found the air in his bell consumed in a shorter time when he drank spirits, than when he only used water. The biliary secretions, he thinks, must be much af-

* See Trotter on the Effects of Intemperance in Drinking, p. 55, &c.

fected by this hydrogene, as he seems to think that the resinous matter which bile contains is *from this cause* much increased, after spirituous potations, and that liver complaints and calculi may be thus increased, seems to him very probable.

But the superabundance of combustible matter, collected in the body by habits of intemperance, is made still more probable by the terrible catastrophe of several people, chiefly females, who were found almost totally consumed, in situations where they could only have come in contact with the fire, and even in some cases, where that was not ascertained.—This appears the more extraordinary, as, where criminals had been condemned to the stake, or dead bodies consumed, as in the funerals of the ancients, a great quantity of combustibles was found necessary for the purpose. That the inflammable or spirituous parts of the liquor is detained in the body, appears probable from this circumstance, that the urine of habitual drunkards is uncommonly aqueous and limpid.

From even the slight observations mentioned here, it will appear evident that intemperance of this species has a natural tendency to produce certain diseases, such as *apoplexy*, as the circulation of the blood through the brain is impeded, by the small vessels being obliterated, which is often found to be the case on the dissection of those who have brought on this disease by hard drinking. *Epilepsy* and *spasms* may be accounted for by the narcotic quality of alcohol. Of this disorder ending in the premature death of habitual topers, more instances than one have fallen within my observation. *Inflammation of the liver* has been accounted for before. And as to the *gout*, it is the known concomitant of Bacchanalian

indulgence, and perhaps, (as Dr. Trotter observes) it might have a good effect on the juvenile debauchee, to introduce him into the chamber of the veteran in excess, as the children of Lacedæmon were taught sobriety by seeing their slaves in a state of intoxication. *Schirrus* of the bowels arises from the aptitude of spirituous liquors to harden and contract the animal fibre, and to coagulate the juices. Hence arises the *jaundice*, when the biliary vessels and ducts are compressed, and the free egress of the bile prevented, by which means it is, by the absorbing vessels, carried into the circulation, and renders the whole appearance hideous and disgusting.—It would be tedious to dwell on the melancholy subject of indigestion, dropsy, consumption, diabetes, and even madness and ideotism, (several instances I well remember to have seen) premature old age and debility, which might be enumerated, as effects of this pernicious habit.

The fatal effects of excess in drinking has long been the disgrace of the tropical climates. There the French formerly suffered less than the English, from their habitual temperance; but since they have indulged more of late in spirituous liquors, the mortality among them has increased to a great degree, in Domingo. In Ireland, among the poor, who in the years of scarcity in 1800 and 1801, were almost totally debarred from the use of spirituous liquors, the contagious disorders of the times were neither spread so far, nor carried off such numbers, as among those who could afford to allow themselves their usual indulgence.

According to the medical repository of New York, quoted by Dr. Trotter, a sober citizen of America usually drinks eight gills of spirits, i. e. *bad Rum*, in a day; on which he observes that, it is well *that* continent is constantly supplied

with a stream of population from the old world, or their peasantry would soon vanish from the face of the earth.

The English, according to Camden, (Annals 1581) who had been remarkable before for their national sobriety, first learned this vice in their wars in the Netherlands. The Roman armies were allowed only vinegar and water in all their expeditions; yet with this simple beverage they conquered the world.* But now so prevalent is the mode among all ranks in these kingdoms, that scarcely any business is done without a copious libation to Bacchus; where often the manners of the good are corrupted by the examples of the profligate, and the man that could scarce bear half a pint, is soon brought to the habit of going home with one bottle more.

Sobriety, and even total abstinence from wine, was the characteristic of many of the most celebrated nations of antiquity. The Athenians and Lacedæmonians, the Romans and Carthagenians and the Nervii, in ancient times; and in later ages, the Saracens.

Two observations made by Dr. Trotter are of great importance. The first is, that with regard to the supposed danger of leaving off the habit at once, there is no more than in a man's quitting an unwholesome atmosphere for a salutary air; in the one case the man has been breathing poison; in the other, he has been in the habit of swallowing it. The second is, that we never hear of a person who has brought himself to *a prison* by too copious libations to Bacchus, suffering in his health by that state of temperance which has been imposed upon him by necessity.

A few particulars of the last year of the life of Burns shall

* Trotter p. 141.

be added here by the way of authority and illustration, taken from the writings of a gentleman whose philosophical and moral observations, in his life of that distinguished bard, do equal honour to his humanity and intellectual endowments.—"Though by nature of an athletic form, Burns had in his constitution the peculiarities and delicacies that belong to the temperament of genius. He was liable, from a very early period of life, to that interruption in the process of digestion, which arises from deep and anxious thought; but which is sometimes the effect, and sometimes the cause, of depression of spirits; connected with this disorder of the stomach, there was a disposition to head-ache, frequently accompanied by violent and irregular movements of the heart. Endowed by nature with great sensibility of nerve, Burns was, in his corporeal as well as his mental system, liable to inordinate impressions; to fever of body as well as of mind. This predisposition to disease, which strict temperance in diet, regular exercise, and sound sleep, might have subdued, habits of a very different nature strengthened and inflamed; perpetually stimulated by alcohol, in one or other of its various forms; the inordinate motions of the circulating system became at length habitual; the process of nutrition became unable to supply the waste, and the powers of life began to fail. Upwards of a year before his death, there was an evident decline in his personal appearance; and though his appetite continued unimpaired, he was himself sensible that his constitution was sinking. In his moments of thought he reflected with the deepest regret on his fatal progress, clearly foreseeing the goal toward which he was hastening, without the strength of mind necessary to stop, or even to slacken his course. His temper now became more irritable and gloomy. He fled from himself into society often

of the lowest kind, and in such company, that part of the convivial scene, in which wine increases sensibility, and excites benevolence, was hurried over to reach the succeeding part, over which uncontrolled passion generally presided." Such were the concluding scenes of one, whose social virtues, and uncommon endowments of mind, would have rendered him an ornament to society, and whose name, notwithstanding this lamentable degradation, will ever continue to be remembered by all lovers of genius with enthusiastic regard.

I shall endeavour, in the conclusion, to point out one or two advantages of allegorical poetry ; not in order to vindicate this juvenile attempt, which rather needs, though I fear it can scarcely claim, an apology ; but to shew with what effect it is calculated to convey instruction. In the works of Spenser and Phineas Fletcher, those admirable fictions, in which the virtues and vices are embodied and employed in a series of adventures, suited to the characters of these ideal personages, by engaging the fancy and the passions in the cause of virtue, attain in a peculiar manner that end, which has always been the object of the best moral writers. I need not mention the venerable and awful authorities, by whom this manner of addressing the imagination has been sanctioned in all ages. In epic and dramatic compositions, the poet is confined to a certain range : he can describe the contests of passion and of duty, with all their oppositions and combinations, in great variety. But there are many interesting situations in which man is placed ; many moral relations, which could not be exhibited with effect in the scenes of Sophocles, or the pages of Homer ; situations of the highest importance, which demand his most serious attention ; and to combine this attention with pleasure, is a proof of no common skill. To give one instance,

the lamentable effects of *indolence* could never be exhibited on the stage, nor displayed in a narrative poem; even the lyric bard looks down with disdain upon the inglorious subject, and the satirist passes it by. But when Thomson gives to this pernicious habit, "a local habitation and a name," and displays his character, attributes, and incantations, with the skill of a master, it is not easy to conceive that any person of taste and feeling can read it without being delighted and improved. How necessary it is to dwell upon the nature of a vice, to whose allurements such numbers are exposed, requires no additional evidence, and yet the whole is but an illustration of the advise of Horace.

Vitanda est improba siren—desidia—

a maxim, 'tis true, easily remembered, but as easily forgotten. Indeed, when one considers what has been done in old and modern times, by writers of this class, there are few situations of life, or few duties to be performed, which in the hand of a genuine poet, might not be pourtrayed to the fancy in this engaging dress.

But besides this, he that pursues an hero through a series of adventures, or exhibits him on the stage, is by the laws of criticism obliged to exhibit mixed characters.* But this is not the case with allegoric writers; they may, by a sort of poetical chemistry, extract the essence of every virtue, and every vice; they may exhibit one in its native charms, and the other in its genuine and *unpalliated* deformity, with all those talents, which the poet and the painter enjoy in common,

* There are some illustrious exceptions. We are interested in the character of Madoc, though it is represented as faultless; and as some critics may think, above humanity; but it is precisely his humanity that engages our affections. It is the many trying situations, as a brother, a friend, a chieftain in an hazardous enterprize, and a legislator, in which he is placed, and his conduct on these emergencies, which to me at least render the poem, that bears his name, highly interesting.

in order to render the picture striking. This Spenser and Fletcher learned from the moralists of ancient times, particularly Aristotle, who taught them to give their descriptions almost the exactness of a philosophical definition; and from the immortal bards of the Tuscan school, they learned to add the beauty of colour to the truth of design. The utility of those highly contrasted pictures, need not be pointed out to any reflecting mind; but the public has now a fresh opportunity of appreciating this kind of poetic merit, in the new edition of Spenser, with the learned and elegant illustrations given by the Rev. Mr. Todd. In order to exemplify what has been advanced above, I shall give a few stanzas from Fletcher, as a poet who is less known than Spenser. The reader's own recollection will supply him with descriptions from the latter, of a still superior character.

FLETCHER'S PURPLE ISLAND.

Canto VII.—Stanza 46, *&c.*

Next Adicus* his sons—first Echthros† sly,
Whose prick'd-up ears kept open house for lies;
And sleering eyes still watch, and wait to spy
When to return still living injuries:
Fair weather smil'd upon his painted face,
And eyes spoke peace, till he had time and place,
Then pours down showers of rage, and streams of rancour base.

So when a sable cloud, with swelling sail,
Comes swimming thro' calm skies, the silent air,
While fierce winds sleep in Æol's rocky jail
With spangled beams emborder'd, glitters fair:

* Injustice † Hatred, or Flattery.

But soon skies lour—straight clattering hail is bred,
Scattering cold spots—Light hides her golden head,
And with untimely winter earth's o'ersilvered.

Eris* the next, of sex unfit for war;
Her arms were bitter words from flaming tongue,
Which, never quiet, wrangle, fight, and jar,
Ne would she weigh report with right or wrong;
What once she held, that would she ever hold,
And *non obstantes* fierce, with courage bold,
The last word will she have, or never cease to scold.

Thumos† the fourth, a dire revengeful swain,
Whose soul was made of flames, whose eyes of fire;
Wrath in his heart, hell, rage, and fury reign;
Fierce was his look, when clad in sparkling ire,
But when dead paleness on his cheek took seizure,
And all the blood in's boiling heart did treasure,
Then, in his wild revenge, kept he not mean nor measure.

Porneius‡ next him pass'd, a meagre wight,
Whose leaden eye sunk deep in swimming head,
And joyless look, like some pale ashy sprite,
Seem'd as he now were dying, or now dead,
And with him Wastefulness, that all expended,
And Want, that still in theft and prison ended;
An hundred foul diseases close at's back attended.

Aselges.§
Lust in strange nests this cuckoo egg conceiv'd,
Which, nurst with surfeits, dress'd with fond disguises,

*Contention. † Wrath. ‡ Fornication. § Impudence.

In Fancy's school his breeding first receiv'd,
So this wild spark to wilder flame arises ;
And now, to court preferr'd, high blood he fires,
Then blows up pride, vain mirth, and loose desires,
And heavenly souls (O grief) with hellish flames inspires.

But, to detail even a part of this character in Fletcher alone, would be to transcribe a great part of his three last cantos, which abound with the finest lessons of religion and morality, couched under these representations.

My expectations are not sufficiently sanguine to afford any probability, that those who have been long devoted to this habit, will pay attention to a fairy tale. The young and the ingenuous, who yet are only in danger, may in time withdraw their foot from the snare, and resist the wand of Circe with effect. It would be the highest presumption in *me*, to address the members of the legislature and magistracy on such an occasion, as I hope they are themselves very well inclined to improve the physical and moral condition of the lower classes of the community. But close attention to the subject is no less needful than good resolutions. Higher bounties on exportation of spirituous liquors to countries where they are in demand, together with heavier duties upon home consumption, might require consideration, though in this case it seems we must be cautious of interference with the profits of the Creolian rum factor.

The distillation of grain is defended as the best encouragement of agriculture, but that this end might be sufficiently attained by the operations of the brewery alone, seems not very dubious. When vast quantities of the stores, which had been set apart for the distilleries, were converted to the nou-

rishment of the poor, in the years of famine, it does not appear that any great deficiency in the revenue was the consequence.

I shall conclude with the observations of an author who sets this matter in a very strong light, but whether in a just point of view, it is not for me to determine. What *he* says, however, deserves some attention.

"As to producing a revenue to the state by such means, viz. the encouragement to distilleries; if it injures the health of your people, I ask, would it be justifiable to lay a tax upon funerals, and then inoculate your country with the plague? This also would produce a revenue, and as to the advantage which they cause by raising the value of land, I very much doubt whether it is beneficial to do so by means that debase the value of man."

THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

CANTO I.

Argument.

The secret way Narcestes shews,
The fancy to beguile;
And Circe's train, with snares enclose
Ogygia's favour'd isle:

*Comus, farewel! farewel, ye nights of glee,
When letter'd care was lost in genial joy,
When †Alma trim'd her evening lamp for thee,
Whose beam dispell'd the tedious, dull, annoy
Of Zeno's lore; and bade her sons employ
In kindlier tasks the Attic ev'ning long;
While mirth and wine evok'd the talent coy,
The bandied jest, the deep engaging song,
And each spontaneous birth of fancy ever young.

For ever now farewel! and oh ye Powers
That o'er th' assembly shed a softer light,
Ye saw no feud deform our social hours,
Nor malice rankling deep, nor louring spite,

* The author here speaks in the *assumed* character of a Bacchanalian, which, at all times, has been quite foreign to his habits and disposition.

† Poetical name of the university of Dublin, where the author was educated.

They fled, and mingled with the shade of night:
And Friendship, holy Hermit! came instead,
With Candour join'd, to bless the gladsome rite;
And ancient Faith the fair procession led,
And sometimes Love himself would show his radiant head.

There every virtue, by reflection rais'd,
From rosy bowls spontaneous seem'd to spring;
Touch'd by the spell, the hidden talent blaz'd,
Successive kindling round the jovial ring.
There oft the future Bard essay'd to sing,
Or ready fiction grac'd his simple tale,
And youthful Roscius try'd the soul to sting
With fancy'd woe: or down the gloomy vale
Of terror, led at will his list'ning audience pale.

Argute, of right and wrong, the Man of Law
The nice distinction drew with subtle speed:
With accents tun'd the general breast to thaw,
The patriot learn'd his country's cause to plead.
*Cosmo! you seem'd ordain'd to every meed
That Virtue on the chosen few bestows;
And ev'ry Muse your wand'rings seem'd to lead
Thro' various paths, yet on thy morn arose,
Thy bright distinguish'd morn, a train of dark'ning woes.

* A friend of the author's, whose talents would have entitled him to the highest academical honours, but domestic misfortunes, attended with some circumstances that wounded his feelings, naturally delicate, obliged him to leave his native country, and relinquish his opening prospects.

*O say, while on the banks of Ganges' flood
Thou feel'st the sun embrown thy manly frame,
Or prodigal of long-descended blood,
Follow'st on RODNEY's decks the call of fame:
Say, feels thy bosom yet the lambent flame
That warm'd our kindred souls in *Alma's* bowers,
And haply kindling at some glorious name,
With song heroic sooth'st the sultry hours,
Or call'st to fond review the scenes that once were ours?

Or, if thou wing'st thy disembodied flight,
And view'st with pitying look thy friend beneath;
Turn hither from yon argent fields of light
Thy cherub eye, and mark the constant faith
That still pursues thee down the vale of death;
And oh! one beam of intellectual day
On him who weaves for thee this simple wreath
Dispense benign, to guide his lonely way,
Where minstrel, old or young, was never seen to stray.

Or do thy old compeers attract thy view?
Oft wilt thou see the renegade belie
Those seeming virtues that spontaneous grew
Midst scenes of Bacchanalian revelry;
Like gourds that spring beneath an Asian sky
By night, and sicken in the blaze of noon.
O teach thy friend the backward spell to try,
That disenchants the soul, by Circe's boon
Entangled; as he strays beneath the midnight moon.

* This was written in the year 1780, while the author was uncertain of his fate:—he heard of his death a few years ago.

From yonder Naiad nymphs I long to know
The liquid meaning of their warbled strain ;
If some sad tale they tell of ancient woe,
Some baleful chance that spoil'd their fair domain :
Often they seem of broken faith to 'plain,
Of rites disturb'd and violations foul,
Of deep, successful guile, by Stygian train
Long hatch'd ; and realms, beneath the dark control
Of vice and slavery sunk, that damp the rising soul.

Was there a time that saw your virgin choir
With vows addrest, and deck'd with honours due,
When on your altars rose the hallow'd fire,
Guiltless of blood, and happy mortals knew
No draught that fires the veins, but call'd to you
For that pure lymph that sports the meads along,
That clothes in vernal vest the smiling view,
Feeds the bent boughs, with fruits autumnal hung,
And cheers the happy droves that yon green pastures throng ?

There was—for see ! long ages past return,
And seem to bring again the times of gold ;
Kesars and kings forsake the funeral urn.
Lo ! Rome's long-vanish'd glories first unfold,
Sparta's grave sons, and Attic triumphs old,
Afric and Ind before the mental eye
Expanded sweep, and many a region cold
And swarthy nation fleet in silence by,
At length a broad isle shows her rocky verge on high.

Hail! ye rude scenes and devious dells forlorn,
Ye rising slopes, bedeck'd with various green,
Though yonder cliffs are clad with rugged thorn,
As here the hand of art had never been,
Sweet smiles the lawn that spreads the bow'rs between;
Yon glades that steal in checquer'd light away;
Yon streams that wander thro' the solemn scene;
How bright their bosoms clear reflect the ray,
As yon indented vale they cross in wanton play.

Yet marks of heavenly wrath were seen around,
The swart stars rage, and blight of noxious dew;
Her stateliest plants confess'd the thunder's wound,
And by the slanting shaft of lightning blue
Transfixt, were seen to pine, a piteous view:
'Mongst them an hermit ply'd the heavenly art,
And slowly seem'd their vigour to renew,
Closing the scar of Jove's avenging dart,
And sighs and bursting groans bespoke a loaded heart.

With gentle voice I hail'd the man of toil:
Mild he reply'd, and from his labour ceast,
As glad a respite of his woes awhile
To find, and meet at length an human guest.
Then, on the sward, inviting welcome rest,
He sate, and 'gan this moving tale to tell;
By what disast'rous chance a wretch, unblest,
Degraded from the heavenly choir he fell,
While anguish deep was seen his aged breast to swell.

" Worn with the toils of many a century,
A being, once for nobler tasks design'd,
Thou seest! when active, unconfin'd, and free
I trode the ooze, and wanton'd on the wind;
But now, my early honours all resign'd,
Folly has seiz'd, and left me heir to Shame,
And here the wayward powers their captive bind,
The stubborn trunk with ceaseless care to tame,
Till Fate's concluding stroke dissolve the mundane frame.

" Commission'd erst to watch the human soul,
To tend the generous seeds of early worth,
Prolific vice and folly to control,
And lead the nobler thoughts to timely birth;
With heavenly gifts I blest the sons of earth,
Their minds illumin'd, and their fancy fed
With visions pure, and call'd the cherub forth
With early speed the ways of heaven to tread,
While Virtue round their paths successive glories shed.

" Pow'rs, how abus'd, and gifts how misapply'd![a]
With dark intent the human soul I scann'd,
With foul design his noblest pow'rs I try'd,
Found out his bent, and thence his ruin plann'd.
'Twas when the son of Circe touch'd the strand,
In evil hour, from eastern realms afar,
An exile sad, expell'd by armed hand.
The midland surge he past, and Calpe's bar,
Led to this fated isle by some malignant star.

" Too soon I broke my faith, his wiles to aid,
And Virtue's glorious image to deface.
Too soon OGYGIA's feeble sons betray'd,
Saw her long glories sunk in sad disgrace:
But, wak'd to vengeance for her favour'd race,
Heav'n spoke in storms the traitor's direful doom,
And me confin'd to this enchanted place;
Bound to this central oak, in sylvan gloom,
To tend its tardy growth, a weary woodland Groom.

" And I, that mark'd the silent march of thought,
And led the fancy far beyond the range
Of yonder stars, am now by Fortune taught
To watch the seasons' slow-revolving change;
While, vig'rous still, my active powers avenge
My crime, and urge me still beyond the bound
Heaven-mark'd; the twining fibres' growth to range,
To bid the green blood dance its tardy round,
And clothe the sullen year with gradual honours crown'd.

" How lively seems the spring to mortal eye!
Misjudging men! that know not whence it grows,
Whence those fine perfumes scent the summer sky,
Whence buds the bloom, and smiles the op'ning rose.
Little they think what unrelenting woes
Are ours, to whom such labours are assign'd;
While still the unextinguish'd spirit glows,
(Heav'n's energy) and pains th' aspiring mind,
To gross, material tasks and earthly cares confin'd."

Eager to learn the process of his fate,
" Oh say," I cry'd, " if yet 'tis giv'n to tell,
By what sad steps you left your former state,
And how the deep disastrous chance befell."
His smother'd sorrows seem'd afresh to swell:
Then thus—" Oh painful task, to number o'er
Those happy days, before this magic spell
Bound my sad feet to this accursed shore—
Ye golden hours, mispent, adieu for evermore!

" But now to things beyond thy narrow ken
Attend, for Heav'n has heard thy fervent pray'r;
Then leave awhile the toilsome walks of men,
And try with me to breathe a lighter air.
To hear a tale of ancient times prepare,
By minstrel yet untold, or poet sung,
And learn the hand that wove the deadly snare
That o'er this isle the foul contagion flung,
From whence a hateful crop in sad Ogygia sprung.

" Ogygia's ancient kings their lineage drew
From man, but mingled with the Fairy line;
The water Fays* were destin'd to renew
The royal progeny by right divine.
Still, when the senior king obey'd the sign
Of Fate, and in his place another rose,
And Hymen call'd in wedlock's bands to join,
A lady of the lake the monarch chose,
The sovereign throne to share till time his term should close.

* Water Fays, or Naiads, in the old mythology.

" On this, and on the old establish'd laws,
That kept unstain'd and pure the primal rite
Of NAIAD worship still, the gen'ral cause
Rely'd, nor could th' assembled Pow'rs of night,
And Chaos join'd, obscure the golden light
Of love and rural joy, that ever crown'd
Their placid years, till *Circe's* deadly spight
Was rais'd, to see, beneath the Lunar bound,
Scenes of Elysian bliss, and guiltless peace profound.

" She ask'd, but Heav'n deny'd the bold request,
With desolating hand to scourge the isle—
Heav'n guarded still OGYGIA's sacred rest
From hostile inroad, or Demonian spoil;
But still success might be ensur'd by guile.
Her arts the goddess then resolv'd to try,
For much she mourn'd that one distinguish'd soil
Her mighty sway, presumptuous, should defy,
When all was hers besides beneath the ample sky.

" HYDRANOR now was laid in marble mound;[b]
CRENÆUS in his room was call'd to sway
The regal rod, but ere his head was crown'd
With golden diadem, the solemn day
Was fix'd, within the NAIAD's fane to pay
His vows, that from the floods and fountains clear
Call'd the soft wat'ry Nymphs, in sheen array,
Before the youthful monarch to appear,
To chuse, as love should point, his future consort dear.

" Within the sacristy a mirror hung,(c)
Of old by MULCIBER for THETIS made,
When, from the welkin by his father flung,
The goddess o'er him drew the ample shade
Of ocean for defence. In charms array'd
Of heavenly tint, OGYGIA's future bride,
Amid the forms by magic art display'd,
That seem'd along its polish'd plane to glide,
Taught by victorious charms the monarch to decide.

" Oblation now was past, the moment came,
The magic glass disclos'd a pageant fair
Of bright successive nymphs, that seem'd to claim
An angel's love, and turn to blank despair
That man's presumption who aspir'd to share
A bliss beyond the hopes of breathing clay;
Yet powerless all, as images of air,
They past; but one at length, like rising Day,
Sent through the monarch's heart a keen resistless ray.

" 'Twas no deluding form of passing air,
For soon the bright original was found,
A nymph unknown before, but heavenly fair.
The unsuspicious train her title own'd,
Although her spring, emerging from the ground,
Was seen but lately in a northern dale;
For many nymphs, from Ocean's caves profound,
Oft pour'd their full urns o'er the rocky pale,
And from new fountains sprung, that lav'd the gloomy vale.

" But when the diadem adorn'd her brow,
With signs of cloudy hate and cold disdain
She met the nymphs, and oft a ranc'rous glow,
That ne'er was known the harmless smile to stain
Of any meek-ey'd daughter of the main,
Her glance disclos'd, and oft she kept aloof
The sisterhood, who in each former reign
Had grac'd with fairy charms the regal roof,
And led the circling dance, in weeds of azure woof.

" This bred surmise, and in a gloomy cave,
By secret summons call'd, the nymphs convene,
And all resolv'd, that, when from ocean's wave
Emerging bright, the solemn day was seen
That call'd their squadrons on the hallow'd green
To undergo lustration's usual rite,
A charm they would prepare to prove their queen
(Their queen that seem'd their homage due to slight)
Whether of Ocean bred, or born of ancient Night.

" They sought (for well they knew) the parent spring
From which the ministers of nature's lore
To every tribe the vital blessing bring,
And the warm tide transfuse from shore to shore,
Creation round, for hence the waters hoar
Their shoals deriv'd, and hence the plumy train
That through the winnow'd air exulting soar,
With all that haunt the hill, or tread the plain.
And man, imperial lord alike of land and main.

" No deep disguise this hallow'd fount withstood,
Of power the genuine features to restore;
The vizor fell beneath the sprinkled flood,
Whatever mask the foul dissembler wore,
It shrunk at once the searching lymph before;
And to his native train with fury sent,
Or bound a season on the Stygian shore
His darksome days the sad deserter spent,
And there at leisure learnt his follies to lament.

" In secret then the hallow'd urn they fill;[d]
Th' expectant Naiads form a circle round,
And wait the awful trial mute and still.
At length th' elected nymph, with poplar crown'd,
Uplifts the lustral bough—the rocking ground
Her mutter'd magic felt and mystic spell,
The trembling wood her incantation own'd;
They saw, or dream'd they saw, disclosing hell,
And heard, in Fancy's ear, the song of torture swell.

" It ceast, and now she rais'd her streaming bough,
And o'er th' assembly dash'd the moisture far;
Once more a wailing strain was heard below,
And loud laments, and notes of shrill despair.
Straight from Ogygia's queen her borrow'd air
And veil of azure hue disruptive fled;
A snaky ringlet bound her horrent hair,
And flames sulphureous play'd around her head,
As on th' astonish'd crew she scowl'd unusual dread.

" But not permitted then to vent her spite,
Down to the Stygian strand she fled amain,
And to the brood of Erebus and Night
Her loss deplor'd, and late deserted reign.
'Twas Circe who forsook the realms of pain,
'Twas her the spell dismist, with vengeance due,
From her high post amid the virgin train,
Where, like a Naiad, cloth'd in amice blue,
She try'd with borrow'd charms to lure the monarch's view.

" Amazement first and fear the monarch show'd,
Then gratitude to Heav'n, with kindly glow
His cheek diffus'd, to Heav'n that thus bestow'd
The means to 'scape his dark, insidious foe.
With better omens soon his nuptial vow
He plighted to a nymph of genuine race :
And now the tide of time in quiet flow
Went on, nor dark mishap, nor foul disgrace,
In fair Ogygia's bounds could find a lasting place.

" But nought beneath is found of stable state :[e]
For whether all the powers above, combin'd
Man's fortitude to try, or rigid Fate
This dark vicissitude of old assign'd,
In the long tissue of their doom, design'd
Ere ancient time began, is hard to tell.
But soon the Naiad Nymphs their fame resign'd
For vigilance ; secure of demon spell,
No bounded intellect all errors can dispel.

" Yet Bacchus on the hills benignant reign'd,
On which he founded fair his sunny seat;
Nor Dirce's fields alone his sway sustain'd,
But far it reach'd across the Œubean strait,
Thence to the shores of Thrace the sacred freight
Was wafted gradual o'er with viewless hand,
While old Lycurgus rul'd in temperate state.
Amaz'd the monarch view'd the moon-struck band,
Lead their mad orgies round, and tumult all the land.

" Then Licence reign'd, and rude misgovern'd Joy,
And wild Misrule, and scorn of rigid right;
The noise of Riot struck the lofty sky,
And guiltier scenes profan'd the conscious night:
Fair Temperance felt the unexpected blight,
Like some sweet flower that withers ere its prime;
A sudden palsy undermin'd the might
Of manhood fair, and marr'd his look sublime,
And Waste and Wassail rul'd thro' all the frozen clime.

" But heav'n besides to foul infection doom'd
The isles that lie beyond the midland main,
And now the sparks of liberty illum'd
To daring deeds the yet untainted train;
Incenst, the monarch vindicates his reign,
He gives the word, and Sophron leads the band,
To purge, with ruthless steel, the spreading bane;
The screaming Bacchanals forsake the strand,
E'en Bacchus hid his head, and own'd the conquering hand.

* See Hom. Il. 6, also Eurip. Bacchæ.

" Intemperance fled before the victor's arms,
And giddy Joy and brainsick Mirth retir'd;
Where'er the Thracian spread his dire alarms,
The social bowl no more the circle fir'd,
Nor to wild deeds the revel rout inspir'd;
Down from its stay the interdicted vine
Abandon'd hung, nor more the elm attir'd;
Old Rhodope beheld the sacred sign,
Her frantic orgies ceast, and own'd the hand divine.

" Then westward far before the ruthless sword,
With his foil'd squadron fled the purple God,
His vine-clad hills the victor's rage deplor'd,
And immature, resign'd the generous load.
Comus, an exile too, reluctant trode
Full many a barren soil with feet unblest,
And many a driving storm sublime he rode,
At length this land, by Neptune's arms embrac'd,
Receiv'd the God, and down he sunk with toil opprest.

" O'er all the islands in the western main
This isle was fam'd, where yet unrivall'd stood
The Naiads' power, and still beneath the reign
Of maiden worship, bent the guileless brood;
A spotless race, that quaff'd the running flood
And milky stream, unstain'd by fraud or strife;
The snowy flock, the glebe, and pendent wood,
(Innoxious stores!) preserv'd their simple life,
Nor in their gentle breasts could ranc'rous Hate survive.

" In the pure fount the Naiad train distill'd
Sweet PANACEE, to 'swage the mental storm ;(g)
Spontaneous flow'rets clad the rural wild,
And ridgy rocks put on a soften'd charm,
Nor inborn Hate, nor Terror's wild alarm,
With dark contagion touch'd the deep serene ;
Virtue alone and Freedom's glow could warm
The gen'ral breast, and Love, resistless queen,
Oft stole, with harmless smile, their rural cares between.

" 'Twas when the moon, that led the golden rear
Of gaudy Summer, shone with fainter ray,
And gentle Ceres saw the rip'ning ear
Her winding vales and sunny slopes array ;
Forth as she wander'd at the close of day,
To drench her poppies tall with balmy dew,
She met, in woeful plight, the banish'd FAY :
Full soon his name and race the Goddess knew,
And at his dismal tale her gentle pity grew.

" Too soft compassion—near akin to love !
The kindred warmth her easy heart betray'd,
Nor much against th' insidious power she strove,
That came in Pity's holy garb array'd.
At length, as Fate ordain'd, the conscious glade
Conceal'd in evil hour the am'rous theft,
Nor long in dalliance fond the victor staid,
But changing, soon his easy conquest left,
Of spotless name, at once, and inward peace bereft.

" Nine Crescents now had led the Months along,
And Spring, in amber car returning, smil'd;
The bird of MAY renew'd her simple song,
And op'ning blooms adorn'd the fragrant wild:
When, by the river's side, the matron mild
Produc'd in secret shade her youngest born;
The gentle Naiad nymphs receiv'd the child—
Poor orphan babe! of mother's care forlorn;
Alas! they soon had cause their tender pains to mourn.

" His childish years, secure, in pearly caves,(h)
In meads and rushy dells, the foundling past,
Now on the bank, and now beneath the wave,
And all his peers in active feats surpast;
Whether to ride in rage the stormy blast,
Or dreadless plunge adown the deep descent,
As o'er the trembling rocks in fury cast
The wintry deluge roar'd in deep ferment,
When sad Aquarius' urn his wat'ry stores had spent.

" But darker deeds employ'd the conscious night,
And soon the habits of his sire were shown,
For oft, in midnight hour, the busy sprite
His baneful business ply'd, nor ply'd alone,
For all the murky tribes below that own
The simpling trade, and pois'nous dews distill
With charms, suppos'd of old to disenthrone
The lub'ring moon, or stop the murm'ring rill,
In throngs attended oft, obedient to his will.

" 'Twas then, with Fates averse, I first began
At times to listen to his magic lore;
In secret mingling with the dark divan,
When night o'er all the whit'ning lands breath'd frore.
Then oft I heard the wailing FAY deplore
His ancient loss, and oft lamenting tell
How, in sad exile from this happy shore,
His sires, repuls'd of old, were driven to dwell
Where round th' Atlantic coast the southern surges swell.

" He told how CIRCE from her native bourne
Erst by the NAIAD nymphs was banish'd far,
To *ÆAS' isle, where still she lives forlorn,
Till Time remove the interposing bar,
Or Fate, by covert guile, or open war,
Her ancient rites restore: ' Her right to claim
' I come, her destin'd heir, with happier star,
' To break the bonds of servitude and shame,
' Or earn, though overthrown, a never-dying name.

" ' And ye, fall'n elves! by plague ethereal struck,
' Why deign ye thus in petty ills to spend
' The precious hours, and underneath the yoke
' Of our GRAND FOE with abject fear to bend?
' Is it for YOU the deadly blight to send,
' With mildew hoar the milky stem to spoil,
' Or overhead th' unkindly fog to blend,
' Or brew the blast that mars the peasant's toil?
' Renounce th' ignoble task, and scorn the puny wile.

* Æas Isle, the habitation of Circe, See Virg. Æn. L. 7, sub. init.

" ' Shall Temperance lead the Virtues in her train,
' And her pale vot'ries find the way to fame?
' Shall Freedom lose the strong CIRCEAN chain,
' And match HIS fires with her immortal flame?
' Shall yonder nymphs acquire a deathless name
' For wat'ry stores supply'd, and milky cheer?
' Shall their calm sway the stormy passions tame,
' Your right usurp, and rule the circling year?
' Say, can you thus submit the galling load to bear?

" ' Go claim your own again, and try your arms
' On man, revolting man; their favour'd race!
' Nor dream of onset fierce, nor loud alarms;
' No vi'lent deeds the haughty foe displace.
' Oh were it given our Fury to deface
' With STYGIAN flames the whole creation fair,
' No coward doubts should e'er your zeal debase,
' No weak compassion bid your vengeance spare:
' But HE, whose voice we dread, forbids th' unequal war.

" ' But still their virtue fears our secret force,
' Till pure it glows, by long probation try'd,
' Our arts can lure them from their rigid course,
' And drag their weak supplanted steps aside;
' For while th' ethereal spark to dust ally'd
' Inhabits here, the tenant of a day,
' 'Tis doom'd for life the trial to abide
' Of long successive ills in dark array,
' And with the powers beneath maintain a dubious fray.

" ' But if, to unbecoming fears resign'd,
' Ye still recoil, and shun th' unequal fight,
' Some other means our godlike race will find,
' By force or fraud to gain our ravish'd right.
' Then, ye degen'rate sons of ancient Night
' When proud Rebellion feels the galling chain,
' On you the Vict'ress shall employ her might;
' Then, doom'd to double toil by land and main,
' Your labours shall support the weight of Circe's reign.'

" They heard, and were abash'd, and through their files
Pale terror spread beneath the glimm'ring moon;
Then, offering all at once their ardent toils,
They close him round; the chief accepts the boon;
Then with their dusky lord consulting soon,
The thronging elves with cloudy aspect meet;
Then once again the master Fay begun
With surer wile to plan the deadly feat,
And weave the Stygian snare, conceal'd in dark retreat.

" ' Say, ye that know,' our Elfin regent cry'd,
' The readiest avenue to reach his heart;
' To win his warmest passions to our side,
' And mimic nature's power with deepest art.
' All in the glorious toil shall bear a part,
' And help our cause with elemental aid;
' Elves of the liquid air, and spirits swart,
' That ply in caves th' unutterable trade,
' And shed the sickly damp in dreary fogs array'd.'

" 'Twas then in evil hour my counsel drew,
Attention deep as best of all the train,
Temptation's soft seductive hour I knew,
And when with surest hand to spread the stain;
Then thus, ' Assembled powers of earth and main,
' My counsel tend; my first and early care
' Was still, by long observant watch, to gain
' Knowledge of man; commission'd to repair
' Whate'er malignant chance, or wayward choice can mar.

" ' Ripen'd by time, when now the vig'rous shoots
' Of intellect can boast their full increase,
' And the mind boasts her more than mortal fruits,
' Then loves the free, expanding soul at ease
' To wander o'er creation's fair degrees,
' And thro' her varied stores to range at will.
' Of earth, and ambient air, and subject seas,
' Tracing the wide extent with eager skill,
' Unfalt'ring in her flight, her wish unsated still.

" ' From this strong bent, by Nature's hand impos'd,(i)
' Fair Knowledge shines, and sage Experience draws
' Her arts benign, to sweeten life; expos'd
' To various ills by Fate's relentless laws.
' Hence, worn with care, to gain the late applause
' Of times unborn, beneath the noon of night,
' When all the works of Nature seem to pause,
' The lone sage plies his task beneath the light
' Of lamp, or taper dim, remote from human sight.

" ' This master movement of th' aspiring soul
' To Knowledge leads, while Habit lends her aid
' To push her pupil onward to the goal
' Which virtue points, in modest charms array'd ;
' Her features thrown by Time in softest shade,
' And chast'ned mild by Repetition's power,
' Till to his heart the potent charm convey'd
' Strikes root, and wide displays the vernal flower,
' And heavenly fruitage crowns the rich autumnal hour.

" ' Here then, ye simpling tribes, your utmost skill (k)
' Employ, and brew with charms the potent draught,
' Which thro' the working fancy may instill
' False energy, and warm the mounting thought
' With phantoms gay, in airy visions brought,
' Shifting, as fancy wills, the gaudy scene,
' In grateful change, by mortal toil unsought,
' While forms of livelier coinage fleet between
The grave saturnine shapes, and please their moody queen.

" ' Thus with false lights the active mind employ
' And waste her powers, for nobler tasks design'd,
' With semblance fair of rich Variety,
' Fit phantoms to deceive the prison'd mind ;
' Let Habit then, for virtue's aid assign'd,
' Potent, but blind, by soft seduction led,
' On the sick soul the incantation bind,
' Till Mem'ry's self forgets her path to tread,
' And Reason last declines and sinks among the dead.'

" Then to the front advanc'd a meagre sprite,
NARCESTES nam'd, who every simple knew
Of numbing power, and oft, at dead of night,
From his dark stores the steaming poison drew,
Which, like the Parthian shaft, or lightning blue,
Smites the distorted limb with palsied stroke;
Or thro' the shiv'ring nerves a STYGIAN dew
Sheds frore, or bends the man beneath the yoke
Of dire spasmodic charm, or ague's chilling shock.

" About his robe a scaly Dipsas* wreath'd,
And round his locks the baneful hemlock twin'd;
A sceptre in his hand, by fate bequeath'd
Of CYRNEAN yew; on this the sage reclin'd,
And thus began: 'Ye Elfin powers that bind
'The soul at will, or set the prisoner free:
'The habitudes and bents of human kind
'ADGISTES well hath shown, now leave to me
'The means to hurl them down from reason's proud degree.

" 'Those spirits bland, that by the nerves convey
'Quick notices of every chance below,
'I can retard or speed with mighty sway,
'And urge their haste with strong instinctive glow.
'Thus on the seething brain my art will throw
'Illusions fair, till half to frenzy wrought
'The waken'd powers of fancy seem to flow,
'In a full tide of energetic thought,
'And glorious visions bring, before with labour sought.

* Dipsas, a serpent whose poison, communicated to the blood, causes intolerable thirst See Lucan Phars. L. 9.

" ' But while in jocund tides the spirits roll,
' Commixt, a cold Lethæan liquor mines,
' Invading every passage to the soul,
' While nature to the nerves in vain assigns
' Their task, unless the cup of CIRCE joins
' HABITUAL aid, to urge them in their course,
' Till half extinct the beam of reason shines,
' And thought lies smother'd in its infant source,
' Till wak'd again to life by drugs infusive force.

" ' Thus reason, heavenly gift, with HABIT join'd,
' And lent to man to wing his upward flight,
' Shall quit their standard, and with us combin'd,
' Assist the arms of HADES and of night ;
' And soon, if yonder stars I read aright,
' Fit for our ends, a season will ensue
' When LEO's rage, with SOL's meridian might
' Combin'd above, shall scorch the sylvan crew,
' The gath'ring clouds consume, and drink the kindly dew.

" ' Then first, the virtue of my charms to try,
' The Naiad nymphs themselves the draught shall prove,
' Most guileless race of all beneath the sky,
' That range the plain or thro' the green wood rove:
' 'Tis easy to beguile with shows of Love
' And Friendship fair the simple sisterhood ;
' For no suspicions haunt the hallow'd grove,
' Nor dreams the gentle tribe that rules the flood
' How long they foster'd fair an imp of STYGIAN brood.

" ' A nobler end the wat'ry toil awaits
  ' Than the mere process of a magic rite;
' At length the trial shall involve the fates
  ' Of MAN, and on his head in ruin light;
  ' While he, unconscious of the STYGIAN sleight,
' Spontaneous plunges down in CIRCE's wave;
  ' Ruin he meets, which, by a timely flight,
' He might have shunn'd: our wiles he long might brave,
' No Tartar den he dreads till to himself a slave.

" ' Be this my task:' his elves, with loud applause,
  Consent, and range beneath his dusky wing,
The necessary aids." But now to pause:
  Night calls, and PHILOMEL begins to sing,
  The Muse, fatigu'd, to Aganippe's spring
Retires, and Hesper lights his lamp afar.
  The falling dews their welcome tribute bring,
And rising CYNTHIA yokes her silver car,
While to their quiet homes the weary swains repair."

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

CANTO II.

Argument.

By shows of seeming pleasure led,
The wat'ry maidens stray,
Forsake the flower-enamell'd mead
To mix in airy fray.

But why repine? if Youth's luxuriant tide
Begins to ebb, yet calmer days succeed;
What tho' my blossoms vail their vernal pride,
Yet summer brings along the timely meed
Of golden fruit, and now the gen'rous seed
That fill'd the fost'ring glebe in early spring
Begin apace the milky stem to breed,
And o'er the wavy tilth, on wanton wing,
Float the redundant gales, and round their fragrance fling.

Tho' Comus flees, with all his sportive glee,
Yet Study boasts her sober charms instead;
Yet sports the Muse beneath the hawthorn tree,
That crowns with solemn shade the dewy head
Of yonder hill, where oft, by Spenser led,
I meet the gentle breeze at sultry noon;
Or when the sun has reach'd his western bed,
I wander slow the woodland vale adown,
And, twinkling thro' the copse, salute the rising moon.

And oft, at early dawn, the HEBREW swain
Rouses to serious task, with potent call,
To trace from age to age the spreading stain,
From common sire descending over all.
The HAND divine that broke the mighty fall,
And from the foe reclaim'd the ransom'd spoil,
Deep cause of sorrow thro' the STYGIAN hall,
When the dark monarch saw his deadly guile
On his rebellious head with double rage recoil.

At times, the sabbath morn returning bright,
Invites her decent vot'ries far and near,
And rang'd in seemly pews, (a solemn sight)
The silent audience lend an heedful ear,
Where the pure gospel page explains the seer,
And to the prophet's lore the apostle lends
Reflected light, till from her radiant sphere,
In sunny robe celestial Truth descends,
And with the hallow'd strain her voice harmonious blends.

Thus gently rolls the varied week along;
The solemn sad commixt with sprightly gay,
And oft the deep delight of ancient song
In rapture sends the gliding hours away;
And oft the Muse, with many a faint essay,
Flutt'ring her pinions vain, attempts to soar.
Ah, may no critic mark her idle play,
Nor envious hand derange her childish store,
Nor proud declaimer scorn her unsubstantial lore!

And oft the parish clerk, a rev'rend guide,
Directs with kindly care my younger skill,
To deck my garden trim with decent pride,
And how 'tis meet a scanty glebe to till;
Along the thirsty mould he leads the rill,
With birchen fork he props the bending pea;
A vet'ran unsubdu'd, of stubborn will,
Right seldom known to bend an humble knee,
Except on Sunday morn, to say Amen with me.

Long the disastrous life of arms he led,
Expert in all the deadly trade of war;
In many a well-contested field he bled,
From Belgic Fontenoy to Niagar,
And where the swarthy Indian sees afar
Old Europe's active sons, a spoiler train
By Ganges flood; beneath the sultry star
Claim the rich soil, and arrogate the main,
Then sinks ignobly down, and hugs the servile chain.

Unhappy life! from hence the soldier learns
Habitual to renew his wasted powers
With Circe's charmed cup, and thoughtless earns
Untimely eld, that o'er his blooming hours
Hangs immature, and all the man devours,
And the fair fruitage in the germ destroys,
While dark'ning still before, the prospect lours,
And blights autumnal wither all his joys;
Yet still the charmed bowl his slumb'ring sense decoys.

This hangs portentous o'er the rev'rend sire,
An hovering fog that dims his closing day;
Else, smiling, calm, his ev'ning might retire,
And ebbing life, without a pang, away
Gently might steal. But now, in foul array
Disgraceful ills the lamp of life invade,
The Hydrops still athirst and slow decay,
The gout from head to heel that roams unstaid,
With many a grinding pain that mocks the leeches aid.

Such the sad lot of many a soul renown'd,(l)
By social bent seduc'd to drink their bane,
While Mirth and warm Benevolence around,
Illusive sports, with all the seeming train
Of virtues fair; and from the heart amain,
Th' expanded heart, in full augmented tide,
Fresh spirits mount, and warm the seething brain,
With notions new, to sober hours deny'd,
And gay fantastic shapes, by dubious light discry'd.

To strong incentives thus, tempestuous flaws
The tainted spirits us'd, forget to rise,
And flagging in their course, ignobly pause,
Till Circe's cup their wonted speed supplies,*
The common notices, the common ties
Of life, solicit faint; the feeble call
To the unfeeling sense in vain applies,
Till gradual creeps the torpor over all,
And sinks the man below the tenants of the stall.

* See c. 1, 67, 69.

Ah whence, ye Naiad Nymphs, the dire mistake,
To foster thus an imp of Stygian brood;
Soon round the plaintive shores of Nygia's lake
Shall every nymph that rules the western flood
Lament your doom, in watchet weed endu'd;
And execrate aloud the fatal morn
That first beheld the simple sisterhood
Receive with pearly arms the babe forlorn,
And round with asphodel his cradle soft adorn.

Ye nymphs of Cyrrha, now your secret springs
Unlock, a louder strain demands your aid,
Narcestes' fraud with fuller note to sing,
And how his guile beneath the pendent shade
Of old each silver-footed fair betray'd.
My yet unpractis'd Muse presumes to tell
Their fate; nor ye despise a rural maid,
No taint obscure she brings, to blot your well,
Nor breathes infection round the Heliconian cell.

"Ogygia's guardian saw the storm impend,"
Adgistes thus prolong'd his tale of woe,
He knew 'twas vain his vassals to defend,
When heav'n design'd, with deep inflicted blow,
The genuine temper of their faith to show,
And prove with menac'd plagues the favour'd race.
He saw the simple Naiads doom'd to know
The taint of Stygian guile, with new disgrace,
To sanctify the fraud and weave the magic maze.

', Now Circe mark'd the crisis of her fate,
Adgistes thus proceeds, " her right to claim,
She mounted to her sire's meridian state;
There with prevailing tears the mourning dame
Implor'd his aid with all-subduing flame,
To help her arts, and fire the fervid year.
Too well her parent saw her deadly aim,
But to her pray'rs inclin'd an heedful ear,
He mark'd the will of heav'n, and mourn'd the doom severe.

" Now Leo claim'd the skies, and scorch'd the plain
To russet brown, and mute the streamlets stole
From niggard urns that scantly seem'd to yield
Sufficient stores to reach the distant goal.
No shade avail'd his fervours to control,
On these dry plains expos'd to Circe's hate,
Where erst the rigours of the wint'ry pole
Smote frore, and from the south a banded freight
Of ills, by Sirius sent, fulfill'd the works of Fate.

" Thro' the sick plains the ling'ring Naiads crept,
Murm'ring complaint, and wail'd their fountains dry,
And scarce their wonted pace the wand'rers kept,
Spent with the horrors of a brazen sky,
Their failing urns could scantly now supply
Their bed, and fixt they stood in pale despair,
Gazing around with dull, desponding eye;
In vain; no zephyr cool'd the burning air,
Nor Auster dar'd around to shake his humid hair.

" Yet kept the nymphs their due allegiance still,
Tho' sore besieg'd by many a deadly foe,
Still tow'r'd the ocean each assiduous rill
In soft meander flow'd, or seem'd to flow.
Still bore the parent flood in silent woe
His pangs, and hid his mighty grief beneath,
Scorning his pain like vulgar streams to show,
Tho' Sol began his sea-green locks to scathe,
And singe around his brow the hoary poplar wreath.

" But who at length refresh'd the sun-burnt soil,
And cloth'd the fringed banks with umbrage gay?
Narcistes first reviv'd the gasping isle,
He call'd the shower that cool'd the burning day,
And led unusual umbrage to allay
The heats of noon, an unexpected shade:
Again the Naiad Nymphs were seen to stray,
Warbling their soft note thro' the sylvan glade,
And wanton'd thro' the meads in verdant stole array'd.

" From Lotos' strand the busy demon drew
His seeds, and sow'd them in the passing gale;
Fam'd Lotos' strand, where erst Ulysses' crew,
With thoughtless joy beheld the parting sail,
Nor could th' endearing thought of home prevail,
To lure the wand'rers from the charmed shore.
Reckless of all, they stray'd along the vale,
Or wanton'd on the rich autumnal store
Of that seducing plant that quell'd the reasoning power.

" Of this the noxious seed NARCESTES brought,
To aid the nymphs with shows of friendship fair ;
The nymphs rejoic'd, all innocent of thought
That augur'd ill, as thro' the ambient air
The bidden blasts convey'd the fatal snare
To each steep bank, and winding border long,
And future scenes of rural joy prepare,
With balmy breath, unconscious of the wrong,
Nor knew the fatal freight that on their pinions hung.

" And still a viewless choir was heard to sing,
Ye zephyrs blow, and fall ye fragrant dews,
Soon shall the wond'ring plants luxuriant spring,
And o'er the founts a grateful shade diffuse ;
Then haste, ye Naiad Nymphs, your streamlets loose,
And feed the nascent plants with kindly toil,
Soon will their boughs, replete with genial juice,
Shade your cool streams, and bid the beam recoil,
That draws your forming rills, and bids your channel boil.

" The willing seeds the potent summons heard,
And felt unusual life, as Cadmus' brood
Erst from the teeming ground portentous rear'd
Their waving crests by Dirces winding flood.
Thus, in a few short springs, the Naiads view'd
Shade meeting shade, their languid heads above,
The banish'd Sylvans came, and wond'ring stood
To see deep-woven bow'rs, retreats of love,
And thro' the gladden'd vale a young, aspiring grove.

" Thro' chequer'd light and shade the tuneful train
Wanton'd at will, and now let in the day,
Now, deep embow'r'd, their journey to the main,
At ease pursu'd, thro' vales invested gay
With pendent boughs, impervious to the ray,
And sooth'd the list'ning fawns with slumb'rous song,
While wov'n with poplar pale, and willows gray,
The flaunting Lotos o'er the borders hung,
And shed a mimic light the velvet banks along.

" To feed the noxious plants with kindly dews,
And tend the green stem, trembling o'er the wave,
The virgins lov'd, and in the baneful juice
That wash'd their roots, were often seen to lave
Their pliant limbs, in many a pearly cave,
Thoughtless of fraud, nor fear'd the coming ill,
Nor saw, (when to the bath their breasts they gave)
Deep venom tinge the medicated rill,
And down their polish'd sides in copious streams distil.

" Thus Dido clasp'd the young insidious God
To her warm breast, while thro' her tingling veins
In stealthy tides the pleasing poison flow'd,
And wrapt her easy soul in viewless chains;
When erst allur'd by Cythrea's trains,
She hugg'd with rapture fond the seeming boy,
Deep cause of sorrow thro' the fair domains,
When she, the victim of unlawful joy,
Deplor'd the fatal day she saw the fleet of Troy.

" The pure quintessence yet, from heav'n deriv'd,
Awhile the PHLEGETHEAN drop o'ercame ;
The fatal moment hardly yet arriv'd
When the fell poison thro' the tender frame
Convulsive rag'd, while each unconscious dame
Perceiv'd a lulling transport steal around
Her raptur'd sense, a gentle lambent flame ;
Then seem'd their heads with fresher garlands crown'd,
Benignant Æther smil'd, and laugh'd the verdant ground.

" But soon, by swift degrees, the venom spread
Beneath the gay disguise of genial joy,
And to the seat of thought ascending sped :
Thick-coming fancies now their spells employ,
The sober course of reason to annoy ;
Weak mem'ry fail'd, and high-engender'd pride
Ting'd the pure mind with earthly, dark alloy,
While each fond nymph that rul'd the limpid tide
Deem'd her low sylvan race to highest heav'n ally'd.

" CALLIRRHOE climbs in thought Olympus' height,(m)
And mounts the yielding air on rainbow wing ;
The splendid roof she views with fixt delight,
And hears its echoing domes responsive ring,
While to th' immortal chord the Muses sing,
And gods and heroes round the living lyre
Attentive throng to hear the Sminthean king
The unexpressive, lofty song inspire,
And send it sweetly round the HELICONIAN choir.

"Pale Chloris seem'd to dread the jealous rage
Of Jove's proud spouse, and fled her wrath before;
She calls the stormy sovereign to engage
The blust'ring brethren, whom she rais'd of yore
To drive Ancmises' Son on Afric's shore.
Loud roars the gust, and tears her tender form
The weeping Naiad knows her place no more,
High on the swelling blast, with wild alarm,
All desolate she flies, amid the sounding storm.

"Ligea dreams of Dian's silver bow,
And hears (or dreams she hears) Orion's horn,
She longs her willow borders to forego,
And mount the heath-crown'd hills at blush of morn.
Fearless of wanton Pan, or Dryad's scorn,
Or ambush deep, amid the sylvan maze,
With crescent dim, her ringlets to adorn
She tries, and binds her brows with mimic rays,
While round her lovely neck a starry meteor plays.

*"At this the Moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
Enwraps in hazy gloom the pendent woods,
And stains, with rising fogs, Aurora's hair.
The subject stream forsakes his humid lair,
And, mining thro' the soil his secret way,
Follows the huntress far; in deep despair
She sees around her native currents play,
And burst in devious dells afresh to open day.

* Shakespear.

In vain she flies, the constant flood pursues,(n)
And saps with eager speed the trembling soil,
Till far and wide the treacherous plains refuse
To bear the lab'ring steer, or peasant's toil;
The way-worn trav'ller feels the sward recoil
Beneath his weary step, and stands aghast,
While, by his weight dislodg'd, the waters boil,
Portentous bubbling thro' the dreary waste,
Flound'ring, at length, he sinks forlorn, and looks his last.

"Then were thy fens, renowned ALLAN, spread(o)
O'er many a flow'ry field and spacious plain,
As from the western flood LIGEA led,
With omens all averse, her humid train.
And now the quagmire brown, from main to main,
Had cloth'd the verdant isle in foul disguise;
But tir'd, at length, by long protracted pain,
Her error, late, the wand'ring fair descries,
And loud laments her lot, with unavailing cries.

"Too late the fraud she found, but stopt at last,
Fatigu'd and breathless, in a vale unknown,
From her pale brow the seeming star she cast,
And sate her down, her phrenzy to bemoan,
All comfortless, unfriended, and alone,
And soon her tears a way began to find
Thro' the deep bosom of the rugged stone
On which the fair, desponding NYMPH reclin'd,
And still the current flow'd, and still the Naiad pin'd.

" Till wasting to a shade, she vanish'd quite,
And thro' the yielding rock a fountain sprung,(p)
Where still, at close of eve, and dawning light,
By many a Fay unseen, her dirge is sung:
And when returning May, with verdure young,
Has cloth'd the sunny slopes of Belin's vale,
With many a garland gay her bower is hung;
And as her sisters stray adown the dale,
By turns they weep her fate, and tell her piteous tale.

" Unequal task for my degraded strain (q)
How Blomius wept the Naiad's fall to tell,
While round his lofty brow by Oread train
Haunted of old, where Summer lov'd to dwell,
A dark, portentous wreath was seen to swell,
And stain, by dim degrees, the face of day;
In dusky folds the fun'ral vestments fell,
Clothing his ample sides in hoary gray,
While Clodio wept her spouse in many a dol'rous lay.

" But thine Rhecsa, thine the direst fate
Of any nymph that wore an azure stole,
Minerva's thund'ring power to emulate,
And dart the mimic bolt from pole to pole:
Fondly she strove, and drew with high control
Her sulph'rous bands to stain the welkin sheen;
But louder thunder now began to roll,
And lightning blue to mar her borrow'd mien,
Down the vain shadow sunk, and left the troubled scene."

" In vain she fled, for still the flame pursu'd,
Th' avenging flame, and rent the gaping soil.
The flying Nymph, in wild distracted mood,
Sees from below the molten rock recoil,
And in its womb the glowing minerals boil;
She struggled to retreat, but strove in vain,
Then, on th' abrupt, tremendous verge awhile
Ling'ring she hung, and plunging down amain,
Soon met the sable flood that bounds the realms of pain.

" And thou, great queen, that rul'st the Nereid train,
And roll'st from shore to shore the ocean's brine,
When, raving loud, the Naiads sought the main,
What wild surprise and troublous thoughts were thine,
When all unconscious of the dire design
You felt their currents thy broad bosom lave,
Tainting thro' all their depths thy flood divine,
And, charg'd with double fate, the swelling wave
Sent the contagion round thro' every pearly cave.

Then discontent began, and mutiny
Thro' all the wide Nepturian realms to rise;
And envying Jove his azure realms on high,
Old Nereus summon'd up his dark allies,
Combin'd with him to scale the ample skies;
The squadrons dim obey the summons soon,
And mount the moaning winds, in dun disguise,
In long files streaming to the point of noon,
While Ceres veil'd her face, and mourn'd her fruitless boon.

" No transient fog, nor vapour soon exhal'd,
At touch ethereal of heaven's fiery beam,
But, deep'ning on, the dark procession sail'd,
Her waste supply'd, at large, by Ocean's stream;
And tho', at times, the fiery-harnest team
Of golden SOL the mass divided sheer,
Yet soon, arising dim, the murky steam
With foul invasion marr'd the mellowing year,
And hid in humid veil the glories of his sphere.

" The *Nymphs of air, that saw the gath'ring storm,
Furl'd their wet veils, that us'd to float so gay,
Thorough mid heav'n they fled the band deform
Of dark usurpers leagu'd, in wild dismay;
And where, with ZEPHYRS bland, they us'd to play,
On wanton wing above th' enamell'd plain,
Degraded now, in final disarray
Darkling, the vanquish'd troops descend amain,
Flung from their radiant sphere, where long they us'd to reign.

" Then, leagu'd with many a power to life adverse,
O'er the sick isle the vengeful sisters brood,
Mephitic fell, that loads the frequent hearse,
And Hypochondria still in murm'ring mood,
That wails alone, by fancy'd ills subdu'd.
Pale Hydrops, bloated fiend, and fierce Catarrh,
That breeds the racking cough, for years renew'd;
Dire Apoplex, that aims his shaft afar,
And lays his victim low, without declaring war.

* The Auræ, or nymphs of the air. See Spenser's Polymetes.

" While sadd'ning oft the smiling rear of May,
November dark his dreary pageant led,
And marr'd with murth'rous mock her trim array,
While o'er her lawns, in tend'rest verdure clad,
She saw, with deep dismay and sudden dread,
From sullen January the driving sleet,
And o'er her smiling plains, untimely shed,
Whit'ned the drifted snow, a garb unmeet,
While Winter check'd her rills, and bound her frozen feet.

" E'en * June in widow'd stole, a long arrear
Of wat'ry woe to dark December paid,
And each sad sign that decks the radiant sphere
Receiv'd the sun in mourning weeds array'd,
While SIRIUS, rising red, in vain essay'd
With timely heat to fill the golden grain,
Nor fruit nor golden crop his beam repaid,
No plenteous harvest blest the toiling swain,
For still the welkin lour'd, and IRIS wept amain.

" In that sad year, whatever babe was born
Slow dragg'd with pain the load of life along,
Of health, of hope, and every joy forlorn
That tends the call of fancy, ever young;
No TULLY thence had charm'd the list'ning throng,
No reasoning sage, nor son of sportive mirth,
No bard sublime, that swells the rapt'rous song,
Was ever known to date his favour'd birth,
But all was wat'ry phlegm and dull inactive earth.

* i. e. The rain that generally falls in December was postponed to June: the description of the weather was taken from the very inclement year of 1782.

" Nor less upon their sires with tyrant sway
And leaden load the wayward season fell.
While mixt with Stygian woof her trim array
Sick Fancy show'd, and ever lov'd to dwell
In dreary dusk immur'd, and haunted dell.
The poinard turn'd against the owner's breast
No year so often saw, as annals tell,
When sick'ning life, by black despair oppress,
Full oft the venom'd bowl, or strangling cord, releast.

" Veil'd in a night of clouds, the victor crew
Together throng'd, with gratulations dire,
Assembling nigh, with savage glee to view
The wild aerial fray, loud Neptune's ire,
And the devoted isle in dim attire.
With each successive plague that rose beneath :
When thus the leader of the Stygian choir—
' Courage, my mates ! pursue the work of death :
' Cease earn on yonder plains a never dying wreath.

" ' No mighty magic now, nor potent charms,
' You need to circumvent the sons of clay ;
' Fright not the feeble race with loud alarms,
' With Gorgon's hideous mask, or foul array.
' But gently steal their slumb'ring souls away
' With soft Elysian scenes, to fancy fair ;
' As late ye led the Naiad nymphs astray.
' And taught them to despise their shelly care.
' And proudly sweep along a vapoury length of air.

" ' Hence brew those ills that cloud declining life,
' Hence rheumy damps and torpid poisons blend,
' To sink the soul beneath th' unequal strife,
' *Then* with benignant hand the CORDIAL send,
' With Circe's drugs infus'd, the seeming friend,
' Whence love and life their failing springs supply ;
' Dispel the doubling vapours which offend
' The soul, and bid the cheated wretch defy
' Yon dark oppressive plagues, that load the cheerless sky.'

" Just in the point where youth to manhood yields,
And all for action burns the mounting soul,
And longs for busy scenes, or fighting fields,
Then gently from the fair, inviting goal
Divert his eager steps with soft control,
And now and then, with seeming shows of worth,
Rais'd by the magic of the charmed bowl,
Delusive call his slumb'ring virtues forth,
Till cheated Fancy smiles, and hails the wond'rous birth.

" When sated Fancy now has had her fill,
And Reason longs for more substantial food,
Full on the soul the magic drop distil,
That fires the soul with images of good ;
While warm and num'rous in the fervent flood,
By art sublim'd, the bastard virtues swell,
And ape, in heav'nly tints, the genuine brood,
That in the virtuous few delight to dwell,
What heav'n applauding views, and Bards enraptur'd tell."

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

CANTO III.

Argument.

A brigantine the tempest wings
To fair Ogygia's coast,
His hapless fate an exile sings,
And ancient honours lost.

"O Comus' bowl, why seem'st thou still so sweet,
And sooth'st with visions gay the idle train,
When round the genial board with joy they meet,
And tell the mirthful tale and quaff amain?
See there! who wait to mar the mirthful vein,
What guests, unbid, the table crowd around,
In dark disguise the family of pain,
A Motley band, with baleful Cypress crown'd,
And each his victim marks, and aims the mortal wound.

"It was not thus, enwrapt in Stygian woof,
Ye first entic'd the simple race astray;
Then stood your griesly ministers aloof,
Waiting the word their terrors to display;
While erst, with smiles benign and gestures gay,
Ye taught the wond'ring swains their cares to steep
In Nectar new, when wreath'd in dun array,
Successive steaming from the neighb'ring deep,
November's dreary fogs began around to weep.

" 'Twas on that eve, when first Orion show'd
His giant form, in starry cincture drest,
From his steep cliff the tempest's angry god
The signal saw, and from his den releast
The ruffian winds, that sweep the groaning waste.
Shrill roar'd the blast, and thro' the turbid air
His fiends in fiery bands the coil increast,
Gliding before the rack with angry glare,
And round the shore were heard the shrieks of wild despair.

" Long hours of darkness rag'd the furious flaw,
Till the gray Dawn, with pallid eye, survey'd
The waste of Night, who now began to draw
Far to the west her slow decreasing shade;
The storm at length o'erblown, her call obey'd,
Yet black and dismal o'er the face of Morn,
His gloomy rear the firmament array'd,
And many a plague in lazy volumes born,
From many a tainted clime o'erhung the land forlorn.

" No song the muffled morn was heard to hail,
Of lark, nor village cock, with clarion shrill,
Nor thro' the hanging wood, or winding vale,
The hunter's call, return'd from hill to hill:
Mute was the Zephyr, mute the bubbling rill,
And wrapt in mourning weeds of hoary gray,
With recent toil o'erwearied, faint and still,
Nature entranc'd in torpid slumbers lay;
Scarce seem'd exhausted life along her pulse to play.

" And ever and anon the billows bore
Some plank or shatter'd mast with tackle rent,
(The hideous wrecks of yesternight) to shore,
Or precious cask, or corse unseemly shent.
At length, where o'er the bed of ocean bent
The hanging sky, and met the toiling main
Afar, discovered in the orient,
A brigantine, along the liquid plain
Was seen to point her prow, and to the harbour strain.

" At length the tempest-beaten barque arriv'd,
And on the welcome shore its freight resign'd,
A faint, o'erlabour'd train, that scarce surviv'd
The wrath of heaven, with want and labour pin'd,
Nor Libya seem'd to boast their race, nor Ind,
Nor any coast to navigation known,
From the chill climes at either pole, that bind
The pendent globe, to that prolific zone
Where balanc'd day and night alternate claim the throne.

" And in the midst, a man of pensive mien,*
Lofty of port above the vulgar band,
In musing mood, with measur'd step was seen
All comfortless, to pace the level sand,
While his observant train along the strand
With anxious look his wand'ring seem'd to tend,
As if they fear'd his rash, misguided hand
Against his life the hapless chief might bend,
And seek with desp'rate deed his galling grief to end.

* The son of Comus and Ceres. See C. I.

" And lovely, though distress'd, around their sire,
Watching his looks, were seen a youthful train ;*
The wild waves had not quench'd their native fire:
In some the soften'd charm, most apt to gain
The heart, was seen, and some with high disdain
The menace of their fortune seem'd to view:
One look'd with terror on the surging main;
An angry glance to heaven another threw,
As on his sire he look'd, and tempest-beaten crew.

" Then, turning to the sun an haggard eye,
That o'er the main a languid radiance shed,
The stranger gaz'd awhile the ample sky:
' 'Tis past,' he cry'd, ' and this devoted head
' Must pay the price; but oh! thou living dread,
' Whose terrors found thy slave amid the deep,
' Thy slave that vainly from thy justice fled,
' Hear me, and oh! thy dark avengers keep
' From this sad soul, that longs to sink in endless sleep.

" ' Ye heaven-commission'd storms, that o'er the main
' From coast to coast pursue my guilty flight,
' Since silver CYNTHIA thrice was seen to wane;
' At length desist, and oh, ye sons of Night,
' Who see the frantic wretch, with stern delight,
' Before your terrors fly, in moonstruck maze,
' Upon this head your undisputed right
' Assert at once, the sentenc'd wretch obeys,
' And to his country gives the remnant of his days.

* The Passions, personified, and fostered by Intemperance.

" ' And oh ye mighty shades of heroes old,
' Why was it mine, the first of all your race
' With dastard deed to shame your ashes cold,
' And the long glories of your line disgrace?
' Let then my death at last the taint efface,
' Since ruin dogs my coward heels so fast!
' Had I but call'd thy Gods my nerves to brace,
' I had not rank'd of all your line the last,
' But wak'd the trump of Fame, and swell'd her loudest blast.'

" The gentle islanders, whom chance had led
To the sad shore, to watch the sinking storm,
With deep amaze, the mourning chief survey'd,
And mark'd with pitying eye his faded form;
The general breast compassion seem'd to warm,
He saw, and straight the melting moment took,
With moving tales the simple race to charm,
And thus with firmer voice, and steadier look,
The much-enduring man the list'ning swains bespoke.

" ' Strangers, that seem a ready sense to show
' Of human ills, and on your friendly coast
' With melting eyes receive the sons of woe,
' Tell on what strand the breath of heaven has tost
' An exil'd train, that mourn their country lost,
' Who dar'd the victim bound to snatch away,
' The fated price of many a ransom'd ghost,
' When the high powers had nam'd the dreadful day,
' Ordain'd by righteous heaven the penance due to pay?

" ' Does sea-girt isle, or mainland claim your race,
' And know ye laws, or regal power divine,
' And boasts your lord his pedigree to trace
' From Jove direct, or owns a mortal line?
' Unhappy they, that in that doubtful sign
' Of fav'ring heaven repose their feeble trust,
' When sin pollutes, or angry stars combine
' To lay their tarnish'd honours in the dust:
' Their old distinguish'd lot they loath with sick disgust.'

" He added not, for overwhelming grief
With mortal weight his utterance seem'd to choke,
Till from the parting crowd an aged chief
Of rev'rend port the awful silence broke.
' Ogygia's race ye see, by slavish yoke
' Yet never gall'd, nor luxury's baneful power,
' Loud Fame of us in other lands has spoke,
' And of our chief, who never guilty hour
' Yet knew, nor ever wish'd his subjects to devour.

" ' A chief, whom never suppliant saw in vain,
' Nor stranger left his friendly courts forlorn,
' Whether in perils of the angry main
' Long verst, or naked left by Fortune's scorn.
' And whether here by heavenly guidance borne
' You touch our shore, or by misfortune led,
' Or from your native land by exile torn,
' Thro' brethren's hate, or blood in quarrel shed—
' Disclose whatever cause your voyage hither sped.'

" He spoke, and thus reply'd the woeful chief:
' If bent the process of our plagues to know,
' Prepare to hear a tale of royal grief,
' And learn to shudder at a nation's woe,
' By all the wealth that timely show'rs bestow,
' Or genial suns mature, enrich'd of old,
' Till Envy seiz'd the baleful pow'rs below,
' Whose hell-born hate her rising bliss controll'd,
' And chang'd to stubborn steel her darken'd age of gold.

" ' Who has not heard the name of BELMARIE,(r)
' Her plains by PHŒBUS lov'd, his regal line
' Of SOLAR stem renown'd from sea to sea,
' That held his sceptre long with hand divine,
' Till Fate, in league with Hell, began to twine
' With deep Tartarian black the splendid woof,
' When JUNO bade her noxious fogs enshrine
' Hyperion's genial beam, and seen aloof
' Dark signs of dismal change enwrapt the heavenly roof.

" ' PAN yet with FLORA mixt in every wood,
' And PALES with POMONA crown'd the year,
' No star autumnal push'd the horned flood,
' To sweep away the hind and lab'ring steer,
' When LOVE, who long had rul'd the shining sphere,
' Forsook the sky on light, unconstant wing,
' Resolv'd beneath his sway the shadows drear
' With all the vast PLUTONIAN world to bring,
' And touch with warm desire her solitary king.

" ' In evil hour this upper world he left,
' The weeping plains of genial bliss forlorn,
' The air and ocean seem'd of joy bereft,
' And from the steadfast globe her axle torn ;
' Thus, whilst all nature seem'd his loss to mourn,
' The wayward power the land of shadows sought,'
' Thro' upper and thro' middle darkness borne,
' Till Destiny the winged warrior brought
' To Pluto's steely dome, by hand eternal wrought.

" ' 'Tis not for me to tell, from hope exil'd,
' How Dis began to lothe his lonely state,
' Nor how the tyrant's stubborn heart recoil'd,
' Nor Proserpine, ensnar'd by cruel fate,
' And forc'd to pass the flood of endless hate,
' The rape, the rushing car, and groaning ground,
' Nor how on Stygian shore his lovely freight
' The grisly king secur'd, and hemm'd around
' With walls of beaten brass, and adamantine mound.

" ' Then earth and hell a closer tie combin'd,
' And fiends more frequent bask'd in open day,
' Then Circe first the deadly guile design'd,
' And fill'd her cup with charms the mind to sway,
' And change to savage forms the sons of clay ;
' Thus first the venom'd bev'rage saw the light,
' By fiends distill'd, and potent to betray
' Whoever tastes, with shows of vain delight,
' Till intellect is lost, and reason yields to night.

" 'His healing arts the *Epidaurian** god
'In vain employ'd, and PALLAS saw the soul
'Shrunk from his lore, beneath the opiate rod
'Of CIRCE lull'd, nor found, from pole to pole,
'What pow'rs confed'rate join'd their dark control,
'To taint the germ of health with venom'd store,
'And mix with deadly drugs the simple bowl,
'Deadly to all that touch'd the dang'rous shore,
'When Temperance sway'd of old, but knew her place no more.

" The NAIADS only seem'd their aid to lend(s)
'To mix her poison, and her charms distill
'Their sacred lymph, so late the gentle friend
'Of life, was deem'd the source of every ill.
'Then to the gods, conven'd on IDA's hill,
'Th' accusing power the black impeachment brought
''Gainst those who feed the fount, or pour the rill,
'Who now an higher post ambitious sought,
'And dar'd, with arts unknown, to cloud the seat of thought.

" 'O thou, whose presence glads thy favour'd isle,'
He cry'd, 'Great author of our royal race,
'See'st then unheeded Circe's deadly will,
'And her dark spells thy favour'd brood deface;
'The NAIADS now forsake the wat'ry maze,
'With rites prophane the wayward work to aid,
'Intent no more to seek our winding bays,
'Or steal with soft foot thro' th' embow'ring shade,
'They ply in caves obscure th' unutterable trade.

* Æsculapius.

† Phœbus, the tutelary god of the country.

" ' Forgetful of thy power, whose welcome sway
' Releast them oft, in icy fetters bound,
' Who gives their streamlets unreprov'd to stray,
' And bids them lead the spring, and vest the ground,
' By thy blest radiance led, but now disown'd
' And scorn'd, thou see'st them join thy rebel foe,
' Content to spread her steaming poisons round,
' In Pleasure's lap the seeds of ill to sow,
' And give with viewless hands the soul-degrading blow.

" ' He heard, and flash'd intolerable day,
' Sign of wak'd wrath ; the full assembl'd powers
' Vote to assert his long-contemned sway,
' And thro' their caverns deep, and shadiest bowers,
' Tho' summer lost her fruits, and spring her flowers,
' To chase with burning beams the Naiad train,
' To dry their bubbling channels to the source,
' Their tresses singe, and from the neighb'ring main
' With terror of his eye their headlong course restrain.

" ' Then who can tell the woes of Belmarie,
' The pendent horrors of a brazen sky,
' When flocks and swains in sad society,
' And haggard throngs, beneath the burning eye
' Of day were seen to droop, or climbing high,
' Watch'd from the hills the cloudy speck afar,
' That seem'd with livid stain to mark the sky,
' And oft they pray'd the Hyads' wat'ry star
' To rise, thrice welcome sign of elemental war.

" ' Now up th' ethereal vault the Naiads soar,
' Justice to claim against the lord of day,
' And spread with mourning stoles the splendid floor,
' Prostrate to him above, whose boundless sway
' The universal tribes of life obey,
' Their plaints to hear, and venge the mighty wrong;
' But he resolv'd the suppliants to delay,
' The dubious plea in long suspension hung,
' And weeping off to earth he sent the baffled throng.

" ' Whether to propagate the deadly feud,
' And vex with plagues the guilty human race
' He meant, or on the sisters of the flood
' To stamp a flagrant mark of new disgrace,
' Uncertain seems ; but still with cloudless rays
' The lord of day along his burning road
' Went on, and still the fierce collected blaze
' Pursu'd the Naiads thro' their deep abode,
' Till ocean seem'd to shrink beneath the angry god.

" ' Nor reckless of revenge, nor lost to fame
' The Naiads seem'd, nor stoop'd again to sue
' With baffled plea, but 'gainst the torrent flame
' On murky wing their rallying forces drew
' To final fight, and clad in vapours blue,
' Their gloomy squadrons mount the lurid air;
' Full soon the welkin bright was lost to view,
' And Auster seem'd to shake his humid hair,
' While the glad champaign hop'd the humid boon to share.

" ' But premature the joy of field or swain,
' Of flock, or wavy tilth, or drooping flower,
' No more the sisters sad were seen to rain
' In soft'ning, silent flow the pregnant shower,
' That fill'd the glebe with vegetative power.
' Corroding plagues instead, and mildew hoar,
' Wide o'er th' expecting isle, in luckless hour,
' The nymphs disperst, and blasted all the store
' Of Phœbus favour'd isle, triumphant now no more.

" Fell Thirst before had spent its utmost rage,
' And Famine now his dismal course began,
' His wrath, in vain, with ardent pray'rs to suage
' The people strove ; in vain the holy man
' For thousands pray'd on life's extremest span
' Suspended sad, of heavenly help forlorn.
' Why need I tell how oft the matrons wan,
' Clinging around the fanes, were seen to mourn,
' And saw their fervent vows returned with sullen scorn.

" ' And now a chosen train, resolv'd to brave
' At once the utmost rigour of their fate,
' Left the sad isle, and to the circling wave
' Resign'd the fortunes of their sinking state :
' Before the speeding gale the sacred freight
' In happy moment touch'd the Delphic strand,
' And, due oblations paid, submiss they wait
' From him their final doom, whose mighty hand
' Had dealt, for ages forth, the fates of many a land.

" 'At length, in accents clogg'd with death, it came,
'The sad response, and this the purport dire;
'*The last of Phœbus' line in funeral flame*
'*Shall end his days, then with the god of fire*
'*In ancient league the* NAIADS *will conspire,*
'*Appeas'd at last, and give their vengeance o'er;*
'*This and a sacred pile the powers require,*
'*Built to the Naiads on that happy shore,*
'*That place where flames the pyre is blest for evermore.*

" 'It ceast; dismay'd and blank the band remain'd,
'Pond'ring, in silence sad, the stern behest,
'For well they knew for whom the Fates ordain'd
'Those plagues; on whom the sentence seem'd to rest:
'No lengthen'd search it ask'd, no tedious quest
'To find the last and least of Phœbus' line;
'On me, with one accord, on me, unblest,
'They turn'd the menace of the voice divine,
'And heaven has seal'd their doom with many a fated sign.

" 'In evil hour my destiny I fled,
'And stain'd the ancient glories of my line,
'But all in vain from shore to shore I sped,
'Thro' ev'ry sea pursu'd by wrath divine.
'Twice has the sun illum'd the fleecy sign,
'And twice the BALANCE weigh'd the waning year,
'Since first I saw the gath'ring storms combine
'Against my peace, and many a sad compeer
'By sea, the surge devour'd, by land, diseases drear.

" ' But fate has struck her last and deepest blow,
' And late repentance comes. but comes in vain ;
' The time is past—no more the Gods bestow
' On me the power to measure back the main,
' Or tinge with blood the Belmarinian plain,
' And there redeem the glories of my race ;
' Then tell the chief that owns your sea-girt reign,
' What long renown shall deck the favour'd place,
' Which my disastrous fall with streaming gore shall grace.

" ' Tell him the NAIADS still must spend their wrath,
' On land and main, and thro' the burden'd air
' Still load the gale with elemental death,
' And turn the bloom of Hope to wan Dispair,
' 'Till my wish'd fate the deadly flaw repair,
' And bring at last the jarring powers to peace ;
' Then shall his isle the dear-bought blessing share,
' From plagues ætherial free and dire disease,
' While seamen spy her cliffs above the subject seas.

" ' ONE awful monument of wrath allay'd,
' For ages to endure the fates ordain ;(t)
' Claim'd from HYPERION by each wat'ry maid,
' High o'er the PARENT SPRING, a solemn fane
' Must raise its glittering dome above the plain,
' By art VULCANIAN rais'd and magic sleight ;
' For VULCAN raging for his CYCLOPS slain,
' By Phœbus shafts, with never ceasing spite,
' Still seeks occasions new to thwart the God of light.

" ' Nor from the God this solitary boon
' May you expect, but if your vows you pay
' To Mulciber, beneath the midnight moon,
' And hail with hymns his subterranean sway,
' Redoubted rival of the Lord of Day,
' With his Ætnean trumpet, breathing flame,
' The God will answer glad, and soon convey
' His warmth, aspiring thro' the mundane frame,
' And the deep boiling spring his bounty shall proclaim.

" ' The powers of life and health, that us'd to soar
' From the broad surface of the river clear,
' To shed the genial balm from shore to shore,
' And with new joy the flagging spirits cheer,
' Tho' lull'd asleep for many a languid year,
' Deep in the bosom of the parent spring,
' Loos'd by the fiery potentate, shall rear
' Their angel forms, and spread the sylphid wing,
' And o'er the ardent lymph exult in wanton ring.

" ' Yet over earth and air the vagrant train,
' Wasting their genial powers in vain, would roam ;
' He only their excursions can restrain
' In the vast concave of his magic dome,
' Till, like the summer swarms, they own a home,
' And in mixt conflict recollect their powers
' Of energetic life, as when the womb
' Of Chaos held the congregated stores
' Of jarring elements, that shook the mundane shores.

" ' Then hovering o'er the deep fermenting bed,
' The social bands shall quaff the rising fume,
' Which round the vasty concave o'er their head
' Shall vest the dim vault in CIMMERIAN gloom,
' Till heaven's empyreal elements relume
' And paint their shadowy forms with dawning ray ;
' Their forms, soft twinkling thro' the cloudy room,
' Shall pierce the murky mist, with streaming day,
' As Phœbus, when he smiles the driving rack away.

" ' Then pregnant with the seeds of light and heat,
' And charg'd with hoards of more than mortal joy,
' Weary and longing for a cool retreat
' From the reflection of that brazen sky,
' The mighty Magian to a portal nigh
' Shall lead their steps, whose op'ning valves afar
' Its mazy depths disclose, that cheat the eye ;
' Meanders dark, unseen by sun or star,
' Where still he points the way with kind assiduous care.

" ' There all refresh'd, and vig'rous to the race,
' Again the tribes shall feel the magic rod,
' Their wings shall moult again, their limbs unbrace,
' And melting into lymph, the fiery god
' Shall lead them forth, in form a sparkling flood
' Of Nectar pure, elixir of delight.
' This mixt with water clear shall send the blood,
' In transport thro' the pulse, the spirits light
' On Fancy's wing sublime shall mount an eagle flight.

" He ceast, and instant thro' the list'ning crowd
A mingled murmur past, and thus was heard,
At intervals, the voice of joy aloud:
' And is it thus at last the Gods have clear'd
' Their dark decrees, and thus benignant cheer'd,
' With welcome beam, the long disast'rous night?
' Hail happier day than ever yet appear'd,
' Since first against our isle the furies spite,
' This elemental fray was suffer'd to excite!'

" From shore to shore the gladsome rumour ran,
The king and all his people throng'd to view,
From every coast, the false devoted man,
And nearer now the solemn season drew,
The busy priests prepar'd in order due
The consecrated flour and holy wreath,
For uncouth obsequies, lustrations new,
For human victim meet, condemn'd to death,
And bent for public good to render up his breath.

" The hours at length brought on the dreadful day
For the oblation mark'd by wayward fate;
Dim vapour muffled up the morning ray,
And darkness overhung the eastern gate;
The sacred valves unfold, in solemn state
The white stol'd priests appear, a splendid train,
And for th' eventful hour in silence wait,
Appointed to remove the nation's stain,
And bring, with better hopes, the golden age again.

" Before, a pile was seen, with garlands crown'd,
Of linked laurels mixt with willows gray,
Symbols of jarrs compos'd, and Peace profound,
Betwixt the power that rules the circling day,
And those that teach their silver streams to play
In wanton mazes thro' th' empurpled mead ;
High rose the structure fair with poplars gay,
And unctuous pines the raging fire to feed,
With baleful Cypress mixt, for funeral rites decreed.

" At length, attended by his faithful band,
The victim came, the sounding portals clos'd,
Awhile he stood, then wav'd his awful hand,
And silence on the pitying crow'd impos'd :
' Ye tribes,' so late to heavenly wrath expos'd,
He cry'd, ' attentive hear my last request ;
' So may no curse invade your sea-beat coast,
' No canker foul your waving crops infest,
' Nor famine, plague, nor war disturb your sacred rest.

" ' For me a slight attention may suffice,
' My dust to gather from the sinking pile,
' And where her streams the mother fount supplies,
' Whose springs perennial cheer the thirsty soil,
' Scatter with sparing hand the hallow'd spoil ;
' Thus shall the Naiads calm their wonted rage,
' Nor longer mix in loud aerial broil :
' But crown their banks with many a smiling pledge
' Of love and union sweet, from many a coming age.'

" Mute Sorrow chok'd his voice ; he gave the sign,
And round his knees appear'd his infant train :
Weeping he cry'd, ' To you I now resign
' These precious pledges long reserv'd with pain,
' In the long perils of the land and main ;
' And ye, if aught my voluntary fate
' Of good or glory for your isle obtains,
' If their fall'n sire supports your sinking state,
' To them your friendship pledge, while I my doom await.

" ' For them, for you, my blood I freely give ;
' For theirs the lot, had I refus'd the doom,
' Yet from my ashes may their fires revive,
' And once again the wond'ring world illume,
' When their lost parent fills the silent tomb ;
' And if to future days my sight extend,
' Succeeding times shall see the youths assume
' The awful task this island to defend,
' And from their low degree by godlike steps ascend.

" ' Cherish the boys, nor scorn the humble meed,
' That melting pity on her friends bestows,
' Tho' thus condemn'd the heir of Cynthius bled,
' And sees the period of his lengthen'd woes ;
' Still in his race the flame paternal glows,
' That marks, from age to age, the sons of day ;
' Then hail the boon that fate indulgent throws
' On yon blest isle, to fiends no more a prey,
' Nor wan diseases wrapt in winter's foul array.'

"Struck with the semblance of a father's woe,
A mingled murmur pass'd the crowd among,
Their sobs were heard, and tears began to flow
The porches wide and echoing courts among,
But graver business interrupts my song ;—
Adieu fair hills, and haunted glades adieu,
Some hour with leisure blest, your sylvan throng
Again I'll meet, and catch the rapturous view,
When no illiberal cares your grateful Bard pursue."

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

CANTO IV.

Argument.

Example's weight Eumolpus tries,
To warn of coming guile;
But heaven the due success denies,
The stranger mounts the pile.

But from the central hills that crown the isle
With woody height, by seamen seen afar,
Her genius mark'd the loud aerial toil,
Of fighting winds and elemental war;
He saw old Ocean burst th' eternal bar,
And sweep with foamy pride the trembling shore,
He saw the barque impell'd by luckless star,
With canvass rent to rags, and lab'ring oar,
That to the fated beach the seeming stranger bore.

He saw the Demon hide his deadly freight,
In seeming show of royalty distrest:
He saw the nation verging to its fate,
And hasted down, impetuous, to arrest
The fraudful rite, while glanc'd from east to west,
Portentous lightnings own'd the coming power;
Dark gathering clouds the welkin dim invest,
With armed gust surcharg'd and haily shower,
And o'er the solemn pile the storm was seen to lour.

" Unusual horror seiz'd the list'ning crowd,
And for a time restrain'd the sanguine rite,
With sudden gust the rocking temple bow'd,
And o'er th' assembly hung unusual night;
While ever and anon a livid light
Around the trembling crew excursive play'd,
Th' assistants sprung aloof, with pale affright
The startled priest forgot his bloody trade,
And deem'd some god averse the pious rite survey'd.

" First Mnemon felt an energy of heaven,
(Who still the rite withstood.) The hoary sage
Began: ' Have then the pow'rs of vengeance giv'n
' A welcome pause, a moment to assuage
' Your hot mistemper'd zeal and headlong rage;
' Thwarted at last by heaven's unquestion'd doom,
' That stamps with truth the words of doubting age?
' Hail heavenly fires, commission'd to relume
' The sad benighted souls, and break the mental gloom!

' With livelier hopes, and better omens now,
' I rise once more to urge my baffled plea,
' If yet your patient ears a pause allow,
' And deign to weigh the dread result with me;
' If thus, not forc'd by Fate's supreme decree,
' You dare with alien rites your faith to stain,
' And bring a wand'rer, tost from sea to sea,
' Exil'd from earth, and sent to rove the main,
' With visionary schemes to vex your quiet reign.

" ' Why need I tell the tenure of your peace,
' On which the fortunes of your isle depend,
' When first sublime above the subject seas
' The Naiads saw their favour'd realm ascend ?
' Then all their genial powers for her to blend
' They vow'd, and still the tide of life supply,
' If their chaste eyes no alien rite offend,
' Nor foreign mixture come, nor strange alloy,
' Thus to supplant their power, beneath their native sky.

" ' These simple laws obey'd, the temp'rate bowl
' Is ours, the genuine lymph and milky store ;
' Hence no fell passions harrow up the soul,
' Hence Virtue, Freedom, Love, our sacred store :—
' Can unperverted nature seek for more ?
' Know your own bliss, enough for man to know,
' Some monstrous birth, perhaps, unsought before,
' Some unsuspected brood of coming woe
' Lurk in these rites unknown, this seeming simple show.

" ' Why need I tell the fate of Naxos' isle,
' When forc'd to feed the interdicted vine,
' The Naiads mourn'd the too successful wile,
' Till their deep wrongs brought down the wrath divine,
' Which mixt for man the medicated wine,
' With sharp disease, and stormy passions fell ;
' Then dire Alecto learn'd her snakes to twine
' With Autumn's purple store, and lov'd to dwell
' Amid the festal train, and hear the chorded shell.

" ' The Naiads are incenst,—and will their ire
' To profanation yield, or scatter'd dust?
' Can impious reliques of unholy fire
' Calm their just rage, when heedless of the trust
' From them deriv'd, and fir'd with impious lust
' Of change, we dare to taint the living tide
' With the foul gleanings of a funeral bust,
' (Mixture abhorr'd) and rashly fling aside
' The pledges of our peace for alien gifts untry'd?

" ' Haply these signs of elemental wrath
' Still o'er the trembling isle portentous hung,
' These humid plagues on high, that drizzle death
' Thro' our pale bands, and thin the sickly throng,
' By heaven's permission came to try how long
' Our faith will stand, by terror uncontroll'd:
' For what is man by anguish never stung,
' To virtue lost, to soft compassion cold,
' Till trials purge his dross, and turn his lead to gold?'

" He added not, for faction now began
Gradual among the list'ning train to spread,
Thro' the throng'd courts an hollow murmur ran;
Now Reason seem'd, and Passion now, to lead
The undecisive crowd, and sacred dread
Began the influence of the fiend to quell;
For now to earth his great opponent sped,
Eumolpus' form he took, and chorded shell;
Eumolpus wont of old the holy strain to swell.

" He heard, when late the sovereign voice forbade,
By force, to strip the Demon's fair disguise,
Unsooth'd by hope, by terror yet unaw'd,
Still man was free to seize the guileful prize,
Or shun the gulph, by cool experience wise.
None but himself secur'd his weal or woe,
Yet some dark warning from th' indulgent skies
Was granted, half the danger to foreshow,
But in a mystic veil the blessing to bestow.

" Attention with his hand the Bard bespoke,
On every side the multitudes retire,
When from his lips these thrilling accents broke,
Attemper'd sweetly to the silver lyre:
' Hymns best appease the Gods. The Muses' choir
' Chant round the throne of heaven's immortal king;
' Their sacred numbers quench th' eternal fire,
' Verse charms the fiends, and draws the tort'ring sting,
' E'en hell's inflicted pains no more the bosom wring.

" ' With sacred verse the maids of CYRRHA sought
' *LYÆUS' aid, on that eventful day
' When from the rig'rous north BELINUS brought
' The ministers of wrath in dread array,
' When aged Hæmus saw, with pale dismay,
' O'er Thracia breath'd the living cloud of war,
' From many a snowy realm and frozen bay,
' Dark myriads nurst beneath the Boreal star,
' From bleak Germania came, and Celtic plains afar.

* Lyæus, or Bacchus.

" ' With mingled pray'r resounds the Pythian fane,
' Deputed crowds the holy temple throng
' From far Messene round, to Malea's main,
' And where old Peneus sports his nymphs among ;
' From either shore the victims urg'd along,
' Advance, while sheath'd in arms a chosen band
' Line the deep strait, where, over ocean hung,
' Fam'd Pylæ's steeps the narrow pass command,
' And Oeta's woody heights o'erhang the shady strand.

" ' But no weak Asian now the battle leads,
' No Bactrian sends afar the feath'ry flight,
' The hardy Gaul his singing javelin speeds,
' Or hand to hand provokes the mortal fight ;
' The banded Greeks they see, with stern delight,
' And to the op'ning pass their dreadful course
' Collected urge ; in vain their foes unite,
' In vain with firmest front repel their force,
' They yield, and down the rock the wedgy squadron pours.

" ' Now Phocis weep, lament ye Locrian train,
' Ye Muses weep around Castalia's hill,
' The throng'd Barbarians spread from main to main,
' Successive flame your forts from hill to hill ;
' No more your squadrons feel their bosoms thrill
' At Freedom's voice, nor lift the beamy spear,
' But stoop ignobly to a tyrant's will,
' Or, conquer'd, shed by stealth th' indignant tear,
' Of liberty bereft, and all they held most dear.

" ' Still at Lyæus' feet the virgins lay,
' But still in vain the Theban God implor'd,
' Tho' in the west Dodona's green array
' Sunk in the flame, for many an age ador'd.
' Then sad Epirus saw the ruthless sword
' And fires barbaric waste his borders fair ;
' But when his Cyrrha felt the rage abhorr'd
' Of ruffian foes, the god, in wild despair,
' Sprung from his golden throne and rent his flowing hair.

" ' He wept, for all the warrior gods aloof,
' By Jove's stern law withheld, deploring stood,
' And saw indignant from th' Olympic roof,
' Fam'd Achelous run a purple flood.
' Alone th' eternal edict to elude,
' And try the close approach of secret guile
' *He dar'd, for still th' assailants, unsubdu'd,
' By Fate were doom'd the subject realm to spoil,
' Till his own erring hand his dire intent should foil.

" ' It chanc'd, from toils releas'd, at close of day,
' The Gallic chieftain stray'd along the vale,
' And winding through the woods his devious way,
' He saw, with headlong haste adown the dale
' A stripling come, that breathless seem'd and pale;
' A stern assassin urg'd the chace along,
' Who, when he saw his bloody purpose fail,
' And round the warrior's knees the suppliant hung,
' With sudden terror fled, and skulk'd the woods among.

* Viz. Bacchus,

" ' The boy's ingenuous tears, that flow'd apace,
' Mov'd the stern chief, unus'd a foe to spare;
' He bade him tell his country, name, and place.
' Recovering from his dread, with modest air
' He told how long beneath a parent's care
' He liv'd, nor was Aulestes' name unknown,
' The sole dependence of an aged pair
' Whose fathers call'd the fertile plains their own,
' Of Daulia, long renown'd, till Fate o'erturn'd their throne.

" ' He told how, by a ruffian Gaul pursu'd,
' He fled, unknowing where, the cruel foe;
' He told what countless sums should buy his blood,
' If haply still his aged sire should know
' His son was yet alive, to soothe his woe;
' Fast to the heart his melting words made way;
' Somewhat of heaven his aspect seem'd to show,
'His tearful eyes, that shed a dewy ray,
' And auburn locks that seem'd around his neck to play.

" ' Soon can the heavenly powers obtain their way
' Through the dark passes of the human breast:
' Amaz'd, Belinus felt his pride decay,
' And in his soften'd look the *man* confess'd;
' Then bending low, the monarch of the west
' The suppliant rais'd, and bade his fears subside,
' And to the royal tent his blooming guest
' The chief dismiss'd in safety to reside
' Till on his future lot his bounty should decide.

‘ The banquet waits; the stripling station'd near
‘ Crowns the bright goblet with a purple flood;
‘ In order round, on every prince and peer
‘ The youth attends, the Gallic warriors view'd
‘ Intent the boy, with heavenly grace endu'd,
‘ And ask, astonish'd, whence the wonder sprung,
‘ Whether from earth, or some celestial brood
‘ With angel bloom adorn'd, for ever young,
‘ On some high errand sent amid the martial throng.

“ ‘ But soon to darker doubts their wonder turn'd,
‘ When all for banquet gay, and minstrelsy,
‘ Sorrowing they saw their great designs adjourn'd,
‘ Tho' still their terrors spread from sea to sea;
‘ But now the God, secure of victory,
‘ With fraudful art, his consummating blow
‘ Design'd, intent his native soil to free,
‘ From the rude insults of a barb'rous foe,
‘ The soil where Science fair was destin'd long to grow.

“ ‘ When Pæan's darts of old the Python sped,
‘ And drench'd the Cyrrhan plains with venom'd gore,
‘ A mantling vine its sunny clusters spread,
‘ And hung with tempting grace the pathway o'er:
‘ Here, ere he chac'd the Caledonian boar,
‘ *Althea's son the deadly fruit survey'd,
‘ He pluck'd, he eat, and soon from Reason's lore
‘ Estrang'd, with Fates averse, and murth'rous blade
‘ Besmear'd in kindred gore, the mortal fine he paid.

* Meleager. See the account of the slaughter of his two maternal uncles by him Ovid. Metem. L. 8.

" ' Here too th' * unhappy Theban chanc'd to stray,
' Whose dire mistake the bloody sceptre won,
' There spent beneath the burning beam of day,
' He cropt with eager hand the fruit unknown ;
' Anon the hollow earth was heard to groan,
' And soon the fated trav'llers met his view ;
' Thwarting they met, unaided and alone,
' Full at their chief the luckless stranger flew,
' And urg'd by fate severe his hoary father slew.

" ' Hither the chace unhappy Phœdra+ led,
' With Theseus blooming heir, a faithful guard,
' Unspotted yet, and constant to her bed,
' A *sister's* love the youthful hunter shar'd ;
' At last the weary nymph, unkindly starr'd,
' With heat and labour faint, indulg'd her taste ;
' Soon in her heaving breast the passions jarr'd,
' And lengthen'd time the growing plague increast,
' Till all her fever'd soul the spreading ill confest.

" ' From this the boy a goodly cluster bore,
' Gather'd with charms, and sprent with midnight dew,
' At that dread hour when borne from shore to shore,
' The night hag flits, and calls her Stygian crew,
' With her combin'd the deadly draught to brew ;
' This, in the royal bowl, by stealth infus'd,
' He takes his stand, and waits the mandate due.
' When mirth and wine the victor's cares had loos'd.
' And sober Reason sunk by rising fumes abus'd."

* Oedipus.

+ The step mother of Hippolitus. See Euripides, Racine, &c. &c.

" ' Anon the sovereign calls a larger bowl,
' The medicated cup Aulestes brought,
' The potent bev'rage lav'd his inmost soul,
' And breath'd oblivion sweet of sober thought,
' The mighty bowl, with starry gems inwrought,
' Forsook his hand, and thro' his veins convey'd,
' Gradual, the stealing charm his senses caught,
' And soon at large his mighty limbs display'd,
' And wrapt his slumb'ring powers in deep Lethean shade.

" ' Late, late he woke, but found his limbs relaxt,
' And powers absorpt in pleasing lassitude,
' His op'ning ear the stunning clangor vext,
' Of matin trump, and all the man subdued,
' The din of wak'ning camps, and clamours rude,
' With images of dread his fancy fill;
' The martial notes by Cyrrha's caves renew'd,
' And echoing round the steep Parnassian hill,
' With sharp, convulsive fears the sov'reign bosom thrill

" ' Thus look'd th' unwarlike Sybarite of old,
' When first he heard the hostile trump afar,
' Thus quak'd the son of dalliance to behold,
' Unfolding wide the glittering front of war,
' And bann'd with bitter cries his luckless star.
' Nor less the Gaul his dastard fears confest,
' When sheath'd in steel beneath the burning star
' Of day, with loud acclaim his bands addrest,
' Their chief so matchless erst, and fear'd from east to west.

" ' Yet forth he came, with show of wonted cheer,
' Tho' much his breast the martial scene abhorr'd,
' The deep battalions bent around to hear,
' And hail with clashing arms their conquering lord.
' He stood, and silence thro' the host restor'd,
' Thus spoke, with rev'rence due, ' Ye chiefs attend
' My first resolve ; with this victorious sword
' I mean to grace my young, illustrious friend,
' And Gallia's troops shall learn beneath his sway to bend.

" ' Sitalces ! Comius ! in the future fray
' Shield his lov'd head, or pay it with your own,'
' He spoke, his slave appear'd in armour gay,
' Against the sun his polish'd aubern shone
' The god in mortal guise, who deign'd to own
' A servile shape, the deadly Gaul to quell.
' Thro' the long files a deep and general groan
' Was heard, and grief began each heart to swell,
' While down their manly cheeks the tears indignant fell.

" ' But deadlier passions mark'd the guilty night,
' And vengeance brooded in her murky womb ;
' Ye vet'rans, meet your foe in open light,
' And blush to seek by stealth a rival's doom.
' Conven'd, the fierce barbarians to the tomb
' Sentence the youth, and name the fatal hour ;
' A band besets the hospitable room,
' When midnight's deepest shades began to lour,
' But mortal strength is vain, engag'd with heavenly power.

" ' With forms terrific, call'd from lowest hell,
' And panic fears that wither'd every arm,
' Some power unknown they felt their prowess quell,
' And yelling Mænads led the dire alarm.
' No *fancy'd* Bacchus now was found to warm,
' A present god impels the raging train,
' The blank assassins own the powerful charm,
' Unwonted terrors seize each madding brain,
' With speed the ruffians fly, and seek their tents again.

" ' Slow on their baffled hopes the pallid morn
' Portentous rose, and forth with sullen sound
' The squadrons pour ; the Gauls with bridled scorn,
' And looks averse, their stripling chief surround ;
' But soon a startling trump their murmurs drown'd,
' And down the rocks the bands successive sweep ;
' The gleam of armour fluctuates o'er the ground,
' Till hid in dust, the shadowy squadrons deep
' Flash out by fits afar, slow winding round the steep.

" ' Ill-fated bands ! full little do you deem
' On yonder plain what dire assailants wait ;
' Full soon the parched field and arid stream
' With mystic warning shew'd their coming fate ;
' Dan Phœbus seems, before the dire debate,
' To threaten burning death—the sickly bands
' Whose coming terrors shook the Dorian state,
' To Vengeance, Vengeance pay his due demands,
' That o'er their sickly host his iron wing expands !

" ' Their chieftain seem'd alone to bear the sway
' Of torrid skies, with firm undaunted breast;
' His voice had arm'd with death the fervid day,
' His power the terror of the clime increas'd,
' Yet half his might the fraudful god supprest,
' And oft with healing words their anguish charm'd;
' But when they snatch'd a moment's space to rest,
' Some panic strange their slumb'ring files alarm'd,
' And cold, unusual dread their slacken'd nerves disarm'd.

" ' To Boreal blasts enur'd, and winter's flaw,
' The hardy Gauls, beneath the sultry clime,
' With growing pain, their limbs encumber'd draw
' O'er the burnt soil, or up the hill sublime,
' And whether Phœbus sought the point of prime,
' Or dipt his glowing wheels in Calpe's sound,
' Their blooming chief, unharden'd yet by time,
' First led the march along the tainted ground,
' The ambuscade explor'd, and scorn'd the threaten'd wound.

" ' Oft to his mates the seeming hero said,
' Why shrinks the Gaul, like some ignoble swain,
' That, panting, seeks the forest's welcome shade,
' When Sirius fires the parched hills amain?
' O tell it not on cold Æmathia's plain;
' Let not the vanquish'd know their victor's fear,
' Lest they resume their baffled arms again,
' And lift once more the late undreaded spear,
' To intercept our march, or glean the routed rear.

" ' Yet persevere, your toils are near an end,
' For see! Bœotia's viny slopes arise,
' Where still the nymphs their liquid tribute send
' To Tethys' realm, and scorn the fervent skies.
' When other plains the rage of Phœbus fries,
' A cooling zephyr from the neighb'ring shore
' The half extinguish'd lamp of life supplies
' With vital strength, and genial dews restore
' The cheerful vest of spring, his favour'd champaign o'er.

" ' But danger guards the path—a warlike race
' Tills the fair fields, and prunes the gen'rous vine,
' Who never saw the hostile bands deface
' Their labours unavenged: a royal line,
' That claims from Jove an origin divine
' They boast, nor yet on heavenly aid alone
' Depend, but wave aloft the martial sign,
' And hem with steely bands their favour'd throne,
' Nor fear to meet in arms the sons of either zone.

" ' And let us meet in arms, the chief exclaim'd,
' To arms, to arms, the cheerful bands return'd;
' Lightning around their heads, their falchions flam'd.
' Again their martial fires instinctive burn'd
' From file to file, and much the warriors scorn'd
' Their recent toils, that seem'd a vision past;
' The troops no more their fading glory mourn'd,
' But sprung obedient to the warning blast,
' And trode, with measur'd march, the wild, uncultur'd waste.

" ' But further on the desart seem'd to smile,
' With rising lawns adorn'd, and copses green,
' At length Bœotia's prospects pay their toil,
' The wary warriors spy, with transport keen,
' Her tow'ring woods with echoing walks between;
' And ever and anon the distant fall
' Of dashing waters cheer'd the solemn scene,
' The parch'd barbarians hail the welcome call,
' And pierce, with dreadless steps, the forest proud and tall.

" ' Nor vain they wish, no fabling hope had led
' Their vent'rous feet in fancy'd bowers astray;
' Here no sick fervours smite the helmed head,
' Nor swart star sent a pestilential ray,
' Embow'ring woods to intercept the day,
' Their canopies above, wide waving, threw,
' While thro' the vistas brown, in long array,
' His wond'ring files the seeming chieftain drew,
' And oft the passing brook regal'd the fainting crew.

" ' And fruits that seem'd Hesperian hues to boast,
' Bent the long boughs with vegetable gold,
' And grapes inviting hung; the Gallic host
' Stood rapt awhile, and linger'd to behold
' Scenes ev'n unthought, amid the bitter cold
' Of northern climes, beneath the armed flaw
' Of winter; and her stormy sons controll'd.
' Doubtful they stood, mistrusting what they saw,
' Till strong desire at length o'ercame their coward awe.

" ' And now they riot in the full repast,
' Till the loud trump recall'd them to the toil,
' Band after band the thronging warriors haste,
' And thro' the wood in long battalion file ;
' Now, cried their leader, now a nobler spoil
' Not distant far, your hardihood invites,
' There haughty Thebes o'erlooks the subject soil,
' And old Cithæron sees the mystic rites
' Of Bacchus interchang'd with ever new delights.

" ' Yet no unbloody toil awaits your arms,
' Yet owns the warrior god his dragon brood,
' In suffering verst, and bred in fierce alarms,
' To wounds enur'd, and prodigal of blood,
' First in the field, and first to tempt the flood ;
' E'en Bacchus too, their martial vigour aids,
' Their inmate god, whose power their plains endu'd
' With virtues new, by sudden veins convey'd
' Thro' the glad soil afar, to each luxuriant shade.

" ' Hence no unnerving power pollutes their bowls,
' Nor fell disease pursues the generous draught,
' The potent juice anew inspires their souls,
' Expands the mind, and lifts the tow'ring thought.
' Hence still unquell'd by steel, by gold unbought,
' They guard the limits of their old domain,
' For this, from age to age, their fathers taught
' The mystic rites, so lov'd on yonder plain,
' And slaughter'd hecatombs the solemn temples stain.

" ' Thus not unworthy of the Gallic sword,
' Expect a foe, but first with rev'rence due
' To Bacchus pay your vows, with joint accord ;
' For all these woods that fill th' extensive view,
' And all the purple stores profan'd by you
' Are his ; your prayers must calm the wrath divine ;
' Perhaps by suppliant prayer, in accents new
' Repaid, he may admit the northern line
' In friendship with the race of Cadmus to combine.

" ' But war must first decide :' he spoke, and round
' His temples twin'd an ivy garland gay ;
' The bending squadron catch the welcome sound,
' And sudden wreaths along the deep array,
' Hide their bright helms, and o'er their vizors play.
' While the fair victims, from the neighb'ring plain
' Selected, bleed to him whose gentle sway
' With purple stores repays the careful swain,
' And gives the gen'rous bowl to soothe his subjects' pain.

" ' Prest from the grape that bloom'd on either hand,
' The mazer large with ready must they fill,
' Then dealt around to each desiring band ;
' And soon they felt the hallow'd juice instill
' Unusual warmth, and oft, secure of ill,
' With deep, repeated draughts the bowl they drain,
' Nor felt the hand that led astray their will,
' And hung portentous o'er the band profane,
' That dar'd his fruits deface, and desolate his reign.

" ' Again the warning trumps a signal send,
' And onward soon th' embattled squadrons move,
' Shoot o'er the vale, and up the hill ascend,
' Where old CITHÆRON, with his hallow'd grove,
' Westward appear'd, and swelling far above,
' O'erlooks with summit proud the subject towers.
' Aloft the insidious progeny of Jove
' Points the fair prospect to his Gallic powers,
' Where each consenting god a various blessing showers.

" ' All calm and peaceful seem'd the cultur'd scene,
' No wasting hand had spoil'd the vintage fair,
' No trenched camp had marr'd the velvet green,
' Where, unsuspicious of the coming war,
' The joyous peasant yok'd his groaning car
' With golden sheaves, or winding o'er the lea,
' Turn'd the rich glebe aslope with shining share;
' The prospect smil'd as far as eye could see,
' That promis'd to their arms a bloodless victory.

" ' Yet fear of guile to closer march compell'd,
' Their strength compact, and on secure they trode,
' Thro' length of viny shade, whose clusters swell'd
' By rip'ning beams, o'erhung the level road,
' Till Thebes, at length, her tow'ry summits show'd,
' And near Ismenos old was seen to sweep
' Thro the dark wood, and near the lov'd abode
' Of demi-gods, his quiet waters deep
' Then seem'd to wind away beyond Cithæron's steep.

" ' No warlike sound disturb'd the quiet state,
' Nor startling trump was heard, nor warning bell,
' No warrior crown'd the walls, nor clos'd the gate,
' But flowers of vernal hue, and fragrant smell,
' Strew'd deep the smiling path, and seem'd to tell
' No tale of blood, but festal pomp and play,
' And joyous notes were heard around to swell,
' Proclaiming loud their god's distinguish'd day,
' And strains that held the soul in am'rous, sweet delay.

" ' Deep thro' his tingling veins the raptur'd Gaul
' Felt the sweet lay, and half resign'd his spear,
' List'ning intent to every dying fall,
' Nor reck'd the glorious boon that seem'd so near ;
' By hope incited, yet repell'd by fear,
' They saw their foes already half subdu'd ;
' In vain their leaders strove their wonted cheer
' To wake ; in thought absorpt the vet'ran stood,
' And now the portal fair, and now the rampires view'd.

" ' Nor long they stood at gaze, for now the noise
' Of onset seem'd to end each milder thought,
' While beating cymbals pierc'd the vaulted skies,
' And echoing brass the starry welkin smote,
' The Gallic trump return'd a shriller note,
' The siegers stand to arms, and wait the fray,
' Daring, with levell'd spear, th' incursion hot,
' When lo ! instead of troops in firm array,
' The op'ning portal pour'd a train of damsels gay.

" ' To the soft flute, and sweet alluring song,
' In mystic dance the beauteous bevy came,
' And as the dazzling van they pass'd along,
' Each kindling bosom felt the nascent flame ;
' Unconscious they how fast their fading fame
' Evanish'd sad before the lambent fire,
' While from the glance of each seductive dame,
' Thro' the thick squadrons shot pernicious fire,
' Still as they tript along enkindling new desire.

" ' A slender javelin, deckt with ivy twine,
' Each fair hand grac'd, and on each head a wreath,
' Pluck'd from the tendrils of the teeming vine,
' With flow'rets wove that mix'd the balmy breath,
' With zephyrs sweet that sent oblivious death
' Thro' the charm'd sense, and lull'd the slumb'ring war.
' Bellona's faulchion slept in idle sheath,
' And Mars stood wond'ring in his sanguine car,
' While Venus smil'd to view the triumphs of the fair.

" ' And Love triumphant laugh'd to see the sight,
' As nearer now the wond'rous crisis drew,
' The barb'rous foe, subdu'd by young delight,
' Relaxt his files, and 'mongst the armed crew
' Soon mixt the nymphs, a gaily chequer'd view,
' And ev'ry warrior singled out his maid,
' While here and there a yet untainted few
' Deplor'd their honour lost, and Gaul betray'd,
' And all her vet'rans fall'n in deadly ambuscade.

" ' In vain; for now the hallow'd cymbals struck
' A louder strain, and from the alter'd breast
' The ling'ring, last remains of manhood shook,
' And in its stead inspir'd a madding pest.
' Their lengthen'd files the virgin train addrest,
' The signal to attend, for loud and shrill
' The timbrels sounds the startled sense arrest,
' The loud trump answers from Cithæron's hill,
' And every panting heart with sacred fury fill.

" ' Religion with Desire his force unites,
' And Bacchus holds with Love a blended sway,
' Each warrior burns to join the hallow'd rites,
' And o'er the sacred mountain longs to stray;
' There hid from war's alarms, and sight of day,
' To melt the happy hours in dalliance sweet.
' For still the Nymphs, with ling'ring, sweet delay,
' Seem'd from their mates in sorrow to retreat,
' As love had set their souls at variance with their feet.

" ' To high Cithæron now began to draw,
' With measur'd step, the consecrated train,
' With bleeding hearts the soften'd warriors saw
' The sad divorce, and loudly own'd their pain.
' And now, slow rising from the subject main,
' Still eve, with shaded face, their cares renew'd;
' Deep night invested soon the peopled plain,
' The sacred hill, the slowly winding flood,
' Old Dirce's awful tow'rs and consecrated wood.

" ' Now through the broad encampment mute and still
' All seem'd, but were not all to sleep resign'd,
' While, girt with wand'ring fires, Cithæron's hill
' Sent a mix'd murmur on the passing wind ;
' With vocal strains the Lydian flute combin'd,
' The timbrel swell'd the Bacchanalian glee,
' The wakeful lover heard, and straight consign'd
' His martial oath to air, and down the lee
' Stole from his slumb'ring mates that dreamt of victory.

" ' With wand'ring lovers flock'd the trench profound,
' As single or in pairs they sought the height.
' Nor yet the widow'd camp her weakness found,
' Buried in sleep, and double shade of night ;
' But now in troops, disdaining coward sleight,
' Flocking they come, and pass the vigil bands ;
' Bent on some bold emprize that shunn'd the light
' They seem'd, and sped along the yielding sands,
' Where near Ismenos' banks the winding vale expands.

" ' Fond youths ! they thought the strong emotion sent
' From heaven, a sign of peace and union fair ;
' Rapt at the thought, they felt their hearts relent,
' And dreams of blood disperst in empty air.
' Now dusky Night, enthron'd in ebon car,
' Had measur'd more than half her ample round—
' An hour that Love and Magic seem'd to share—
' It saw the warrior pass the tainted ground,
' Following, with charmed ears, the pipe's delusive sound.

'Ne'er did their feet repass the yielding sand;
'Whether they fell in deadly ambuscade,
'Or some avenging pow'r the slaughter plann'd,
'Is yet unknown, or if by love betray'd,
'And sunk in slumber by the reeking blade
'Of female treason dire, an easy prey.
'But when the breaking morn afar display'd
'Her rosy tints, a martial trophy gay
'With pale and dismal gleam return'd the glance of day.

"'Why need I tell of Gallia's pale affright,
'Robb'd of her strength, and how the leaders strove
'To save their thin remains by timely flight;
'While, hemm'd by plagues and smote by angry Jove,
'They paid the forfeit of disast'rous love;
'And last BELINUS, by himself subdu'd,
'Clos'd the dire list of death
'And calm'd celestial vengeance with his blood—
'Unwept, unurned, he lay, beside Castalia's flood.

"'Ill-fated king! thy fall Andraste wail'd,
'And mighty Thor* his thund'ring chiefs bemoan'd
'In vain; the Muses and their God prevail'd,
'Great Bacchus too the kindred quarrel own'd,
'Soon with his dearest blood the foe aton'd
'His easy faith, and mourn'd his minion's love:
'But haste, your rites by me too long postpon'd,
'Go immolate th' æthereal seed of JOVE,
'But first, be sure he bear a mission from above.'

* As they are represented as composed of Gauls and Germans, both Celtic and Teutonic deities are here mentioned.

" He spoke, 'twas all he durst, forbid by fate,
Who left them free to judge, and free to will.
Low thro' the temple ran the long debate
Th' assistants stood, attentive, mute, and still,
Waiting the awful word to save or kill,
And life and death alternate bore the sway,
The king, that wish'd the purpose to fulfill
Of heaven, by turns prevail'd, by turns gave way,
As wind and sea contend in elemental fray.

" The shades of ev'ning hover'd o'er the fane,
Before they could decide their country's doom
The council they adjourn, till o'er the main
Ascending day should chase the scattering gloom.
The rising stars the face of night relume ;
Till Phosphor's hand unlock'd Aurora's gate,
Again the seniors meet, again resume,
With passions all inflam'd, the fierce debate,
On that great day ordain'd to fix Ogygia's fate.

" Some taught by art to mend the noxious soil,
And purge with fire and steel from every vein
The latent plague that us'd to mock their toil,
And spread thro' earth and air prolific bane ;
Whence drizzling death that thin'd the humid plain,
To charms and magic spells unus'd to yield ;
But they who still ador'd the gentle reign
Of native ease, maintain'd the dubious field,
And with Barbarian rage calm Reason's force repell'd.

" Yet Prudence had prevail'd, but now a deed
Of dreadful note was done, that turn'd the tide
Of human passions with resistless speed
To Circe's current, for while yet supply'd
With forces new, the votes on either side
Ambiguous mixt in even balance hung,
A wretch whom fell disease had long deny'd
To breathe the balmy air, amid the throng,
By fatal impulse led, had dragg'd his limbs along.

" Whether he thought a Leaches' help to find
In that vast concourse, or resolv'd to aid
The cause with feeble voice, or 'reft of mind
Among the justling crowd at random stray'd;
Or if the fiends the languid wretch betray'd,
For their insidious ends his doom to meet,
Is all unknown; but while his limbs essay'd
To press still nearer to the judgment seat,
He sunk, and life began with gradual ebb to fleet.

" His friends collected round him as he lay,
And try'd to wake the vital spark again,
But fruitless was their art, the rigid clay
For ever had dism ist to Hades' reign
The wand'ring ghost, but now a furious swain
(His brother) swore to 'venge a brother's blood;
And, forcing on, where *Mnemon held the train
In mute suspence, by reason half subdu'd
He pierc'd the senior's side, and sluic'd the vital flood.

* Mnemon, the memory, impair'd by intemperance.

" He fled, and some pursu'd with pious haste,
Others old Mnemon rais'd, but rais'd in vain,
For soon his trembling eyeballs look'd their last,
And out the crimson current gush'd amain ;
Some bear the corses thence, and some detain
The ruffian seiz'd as thro' the port he flew.
Some vote for instant death, but some detain
The course of vengeance, till enquiry due
From the assassin's breast his secret motive drew.

" Nor long the daring homicide within
The deadly cause conceal'd, nor did he seem
Like one who labour'd with a sense of sin,
But from his eyeballs shot an angry gleam ;
Red as the fire of Autumn, seen to stream
Across the lived sky, when storms impend,
And thus he spoke : ' My blood I nought esteem,
' If it be shed to such a glorious end
' As proves me to the state a more than common friend.

" ' I saw Disease and Want, confed'rate foes,
' Lay waste our lands, and bounteous heaven proclaim
' What rites we need the direful pass to close,
' Through which that deadly tide of evil came,
' While that blasphemer dar'd (eternal shame
' To manhood and to truth !) to keep at bay
' The will of Heaven, till Phœbus quench'd his flame
' In Ocean's wave, then rose upon the day
' To see our nerveless hands the glorious deed delay.

" ' Twas not my brother's fate that rous'd my soul,
' Twas heaven's own energy that steel'd my blade,
' That hoary unbeliever to control,
' And send this harbinger before the shade
' Of our prime victim, now the price is paid,
' Exact the forfeit if ye deem the deed
' Merits untimely death.' Thus undismay'd
The murth'rer spoke, the wond'ring crowd recede,
And in each others looks their varying passions read.

" At length a voice was heard aloud to cry,
' *It is the doom of heaven, its stubborn foe*
' *Has fallen;*' its swift contagion seem'd to fly
Like lightning thro' the press, the horrid glow
Of Zeal was seen in every face to show
Her fiery ensigns, while the frantic crowd
With general voice applaud the direful blow,
And vote th' oblation by the victim vow'd,
To save Ogygia's realm by Providence bestow'd.

" Then stepping forth with more than mortal tread,
The stranger bold approach'd the funeral pile,
And pond'ring for a space his fatal bed,
He stood collected in himself awhile,
Then cry'd, ' Ye lords of this deliver'd isle,
' Prepare no tomb for me, nor hallow'd urn,
' But the small reliques of this earthly spoil,
' Of fickle Fortune long the abject scorn,
' The Naiads claim, to them my fated dust return.

" ' Yet ere the moon her silver crescent fills,
' Ere the dark south collects her wat'ry store,
' And roll'd tumultuous from a thousand hills,
' The cloud-collected torrents seek the shore ;
' In the pure parent flood my ashes pour,
' And soothe their rage before they seek the main,
' Thus to the nymphs their wonted calm restore,
' And please with off'rings due the Naiad train,
' Then shall your prayers at last an answer due obtain.

" ' Then shall glad Ceres see her harvests bend,
' Nor blighting dews, nor storms autumnal fear,
' The Nymphs appeas'd, their humble task shall tend,
' Nor more with flaws deform the mellowing year ;
' Quartana, wont to load the frequent bier,
' Shall fly the fields with disappointed rage ;
' The sire no more shall drop th' untimely tear
' On the cold grave that holds his precious pledge,
' Nor curse the tardy flight of slow consuming age.'

" He said, and call'd his mates, the faithful train
Soon on the pile the noble victim laid,
While others kept aloof the crowd profane ;
Meanwhile the sign was given, the priest obey'd,
And straight embru'd in gore, the reeking blade ;
The hallow'd pile was seen, and smoking ground,
An hand beneath the speedy torch convey'd,
And soon the spreading flames their victim found,
While groans, with mixt applause, were heard to ring around."

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

CANTO V.

Argument.

The mingled elves with magic dance,
Beguile the mazed train,
Oppression marks the stealing trance
To fix her galling chain.

"In narrow circle now the Fairy Muse,
Fatigu'd, her consummating labour bounds,
Yet no ignoble theme the nymph pursues,
Tho' never yet in rhyme or prose renown'd;
Tho' gentle Fletcher sports on magic ground,
And bays eternal crown his purple Isle,
Tho' mighty Spenser treads an ampler round,
And o'er his walk the choral virtues smile,
Yet be it mine to glean the remnant of their toil.

"The king of storms with cloudy curtains hung
The courts of heaven, and Circe's triumphs shar'd;
In gloomy pride the monarch swept along,
And meteors red his rising joy declar'd;
And now the sovereign of the winds unbarr'd
His stores again, and brew'd the potent flaw,
Soon to his beck the subject storms repair'd,
And girt the tyrant's throne with gloomy awe,
Awaiting from his voice th' exterminating law.

" Some he detach'd to sweep the Samoied shore,
And half the frosts of Norumbega bring,
Then sift their various plagues the island o'er,
And blast the verdant promise of the spring;
While some, commission'd by their awful king,
From far Cathaia bear the seeds of death,
And thro' the burden'd air incessant fling
Discolour'd plagues, that taint the vital breath,
And o'er the city hang the signs of heavenly wrath.

" Then all in haste, the superstitious crowd
Clamour'd their great deliverer to obey,
And on his Nymphs bestow his ashes vow'd,
If haply yet their rage they might allay;
For nature seem'd by signals to display
The Naiads' wrath and indignation fell;
Their's seem'd the vapours dim that veil'd the day,
Their anger seem'd the blust'ring storm to swell,
And load the moaning blast that swept the midnight dell.

" Twas then with gods averse, and led by fate,
Forth to the parent founts by turns repair
The delegated youths, in solemn state,
And round, with votive hymns and fervent prayer,
The baleful urn in long procession bear,
And lightly strew the consecrated spring
With hallow'd dust, or purge the tainted air
With mutter'd spells of power to check the wing
Of every baleful blast, that tends the stormy king.

" And soon by Vulcan's aid the fatal pile
They raise, above the consecrated spring;
By Vulcan's aid beneath the waters boil:
Soon from the seething lymph, on ardent wing,
The spirits of the deep arise, and fling
Their baleful umbrage o'er the swelling dome;
There round and round they hover, and they sing,
Then seek, by instinct led, their liquid home,
Where thro' the fatal vent th' infected waters foam.

" Nor seem'd their pious care bestow'd in vain
The ruffling storm a settled calm succeeds,
While o'er the slumb'ring earth and balanc'd main
Primeval peace his still procession leads,
No more by discord drawn to ruthless deeds,
Brother with brother met in civil broil;
No more aloft the lurid tempest breeds,
Nor hangs afflictive o'er the drooping isle,
Nor warring winds renew their elemental toil.

" Twas all th' extreme of sloth and torpid sleep,
The pulse but seem'd and scarcely seem'd to heave,
Nor wanted Morpheus with his dews to steep
The slumb'rous head, where fancy lov'd to weave
Her shadowy dreams of joy, that oft deceive
With visionary bliss the tortur'd mind,
The infant Arts were seen the strand to leave,
And to primeval Sloth the isle resign'd,
Banish'd to western climes, a luckier soil to find.

" Yet scarce they seem'd to feel their woeful plight,
So deadly deep the medicated flood
Empierc'd their brain, for still with new delight,
At morn and eve, the jocund train renew'd
The long, oblivious draught in mirthful mood,
Nor saw perdition lurk within the bowl;
Old Time with them a ling'ring truant stood,
And scarcely seem'd the lagging hours to roll,
Till the deep draught again had rous'd the torpid soul.

" Then all was rage, and mad, unruly mirth,
And clam'rous glee, and Bacchanalian song;
Scarce seem'd their veins to hold the rapt'rous birth
Of joy, that roll'd the sprightly tide along,
While Comus, overhead, triumphant hung
Ideal scenes, that seem'd with heaven to vie,
And bent to earth, the fond, adoring throng
Saw other suns illume another sky,
And floods of transport now their thrilling veins supply.

" Now ye that mark the images of things
In other worlds beyond the Cynthian sphere,
And dare to mount where inspiration flings
The veil aside, and shows her treasures near,
Ye that on fairy wing the minstrel bear
To scenes that scorn the silent lapse of time.
Whose tints unborrowed from the blooming year,
The poet steals to bless a nether clime,
Let no untimely blast deform my rustic rhyme.

" Permit my hand the heavenly form to trace,
And catch the hues of that Circæan band,
Who led astray with soft alluring grace,
Ogygia's sons, and gave the weeping land,
For many an age beneath the fair command
Of Freedom blest, to tyrant laws a prey.
Come sing with me, the visionary hand
That led the victims down the flow'ry way,
And hid his malice deep in shows of wanton play.

" First of the band, the orphan youths were seen,
The sons of him who fed the fun'ral fire,
Yet ere his blood distain'd the fatal green,
His last and dearest gift, their dying sire
Left in the royal charge; their quaint attire,
Their shape, their mien, the throng, admiring, gaz'd,
Whether the dance they form'd, or led the choir,
Still more and more the thoughtless crowd amaz'd,
Some recent mark of heaven among the minions trac'd.

" And not alone their heavenly semblance won
The veneration of th' unwary train,
But soon the young, dissembling tribe begun,
Compliance kind with each a part to feign,
Lur'd by their fatal art, the simple swain
Himself reflected saw, in every look,
They sympathiz'd alike with joy or pain,
With rapture smiling, or with sorrow struck,
And each capricious mood with mimic skill partook.

" Their fickle features chang'd with every eye,
And smil'd or sadden'd with the gazer's hue,
Like clouds that flit along an April sky,
And cheat, with transient gleams, the shepherd's view,
There lively drawn, the pining lover knew
His piteous look, and dull desponding mien,
E'en Envy dark, that ever looks askew,
Her semblance found, and that fantastic queen,
Wan Jealousy, that rolls an eye of sickly green.

" 'Twas all delusion foul and Stygian art,
Bred by the mortal drug that ting'd the stream,
Whose secret fire consum'd th' unwary heart,
And the full soul inspir'd with love extreme,
Of those false youths that fed the wayward dream,
With baited looks enkindling deep delight,
Whene'er they disappeared, the blessed beam
Of morning shone in vain, and sober night
Seem'd all a dismal blank, without the social rite.

" Forgive me, Genius of the bleeding isle,
That dare the process of thy fate to sing,
No common artist wove the Stygian wile
Of pow'r, by gentlest stealth thy sons to bring
Beneath the sway of that tyrannic king,
Whose feigned obsequies thy ruin sped :
Forgive the Muse, whose yet unpractis'd wing,
Hovers around the theme with native dread,
Half aw'd by fear, and half by indignation led.

" The youths, oft mingling with the festive train,
For ever welcome and for ever gay,
With tales of wonders seen by land and main,
Stole their pleas'd audience from themselves away;
Scarce could they mark at eve the close of day,
Nor thro' the waning night the watches told,
By bold adventures lur'd, and dang'rous fray,
By east and west, of knights and chieftains bold,
Of India's pearly deep, and rocks enribb'd with gold.

" What joy to see the varying passions swell,
Flush in the cheek, and sparkle in the eye,
And oft the youths were urg'd again to tell
Of wond'rous things beneath another sky,
Beyond the burning line what spices fry,
How sport the zephyrs in the orange grove,
Where cupid boasts an easy victory,
Where brighter charms enkindle fiercer love,
And earthly pleasures vie with paradise above.

" While one the riches of the east display'd,
Another sung the terrors of the main,
Keen avarice seem'd to long, but fear, dismay'd,
Mark'd with a various hue the list'ning train;
A third with hope inspir'd the madding brain,
But Envy's dew his artful neighbour show'r'd.
Of barb'rous pomp that deckt the solemn fane,
The public splendours, and the secret hoard,
He sung—the sick'ning ear his deadly theme devour'd.

" The sparks of rivalry another blew,
Enkindling strife, where friendship liv'd before,
As in close conf'rence with a favour'd few
He told the means to reach the golden shore,
The rest contemn'd, and pass'd neglected o'er,
Swol'n with revenge, and indignation sate,
Blind rage that scorn'd the cool conducting pow'r,
Of reason slow, and love of stern debate,
And sense of injur'd worth sublim'd the spreading hate.

" But soon the gentler passions took their sound,
And chang'd to softer notes the varied song,
Young Rapture smil'd, or tearful Pity mourn'd,
As softer magic led their souls along,
While link'd in social league, the loving throng,
With transient warmth eternal passion vow'd,
And round the blooming boys enraptur'd hung,
Who saw with joy the self-devoted crowd
Invite the tingling snare, and call their bane aloud.

" Nor ceas'd the charm, when sunk in calm repose,
Reft of their cares, the willing victims lay,
With fancy'd tints the gaudy vision glows,
As busy sprites the countless wealth display,
Of Taprobana's coast, and rich Cathay,
Or wafted far before th' Atlantic gale,
Jocund they seem to chace the setting ray,
And reach the blessed isles* with easy sail,
From smiling Fortune nam'd, and sung in ancient tale.

* The Fortunate Isles.

" Some thro' the deep'ning grove, or flow'ry meads,
With rising hope their dusky loves pursue,
While in the fancy'd fray another bleeds,
By rival hands, or sick'ning at the view,
Beholds the rival nymph her vows renew
With his worst foe, while, kindling, some aspire
To airy heights, and soon in dreams subdue
The coast that glows with Phœbus morning fire,
And where, at closing day, his weary steeds retire.

" And oft in longing past the sleepless night,
And oft in idle wish the hours of prime;
Still on the gaudy dream with fond delight
They hung, and measur'd oft the distant clime,
With all her stores on Fancy's wing sublime,
Tir'd of the past, intent on bliss to come,
And oft they chid the ling'ring pace of time,
Or wish'd the partial Fates had chang'd their doom,
And larger space allow'd to give their virtues room.

" But more, with hideous dreams of freedom lost,
The flaming town and desolated plain
For ever found their balmy slumbers crost,
When midnight stretch'd o'er all her silent reign,
The low laments was heard, or clanking chain,
And ominous conflict in the troubled air,
A fiery skirmish o'er the wide domain
Of æther spread, while Dian's waning star
Hid her diminish'd head, and seem'd to shun the war.

"Now to Religion's aid again they fly
In vain, their tainted rites abortive fail;
No fav'ring thunder breaks the sullen sky,
Nor bird with dexter wing was seen to sail
Propitious near; at length, with terror pale,
The foreign youths they call to give their aid,
Hoping sheir sinless suit might yet prevail
To draw down blessings on each guilty head,
And from their dreams dispel the forms of nightly dread.

"Prompt at the call, the blooming youths obey,
And sweep around, in long procession join'd,
The solemn fane, with many a mystic lay,
Of power to calm the deep and check the wind.
Then all in haste the ready suppliants bind
Succinct their flow'ry stoles, and break away
In wildest dance, or mingling swift, entwin'd
In many a wanton maze their mystic play,
Like Creta's active sons on some distinguish'd day.

"Nor wanted hands to strike the sounding lyre,
Nor warbling flute the youthful blood to warm,
The magic modes their beating bosoms fire,
And spread from man to man the potent charm;
The full orchestra sounds the loud alarm,
The masquers spring aloof, and mingling meet,
Then foot to foot, and arm enlink'd in arm,
Traverse the floor with many an active feat,
Close their fantastic files, or wheel with swift retreat.

" The passion each had rais'd he still sustain'd,
And thro' the mystic scene its semblance bore,
First to strange notes, that seem'd by fear restrain'd;
Bewilder'd harsh around the ample floor
Pale Terror fled the sword athirst for gore,
While, lurking low, Remorse was seen behind,
Who, when the victim sunk to rise no more,
The conqu'ror seiz'd, and 'gan his limbs to grind
With stern convulsive pangs that seem'd to reach the mind.

" Compassion too was there, a gentle power,
Who still to each her kindly aid supply'd,
When Av'rice o'er his gold was seen to low'r
With haggard eye, and labour'd still to hide
The furtive ore; the melting maid apply'd
To the pale wretch, in vain himself to spare,
Her mild request the felon flung aside,
Tho' to the orphan's cry and widow's pray'r,
Soft-tun'd, a heavenly strain was heard to sooth the air.

But Pleasure, link'd with Luxury and Love,
Round the pale wretch in antic measure trode,
And ever as the mirthful maze they wove,
The trembling dotard and his cumb'rous load
They laugh'd to scorn, and oft the winged god
With smiles insidious led the wight astray;
Then back with fury to his foul abode
Dragg'd by Disdain, he curst the luckless day
That led him, far unfit, to join their wanton play.

" Again, to calm their souls, the dark disguise
The dancers chang'd to a seraphic tune ;
For dazzling robes, the tissue of the skies ;
There seeming Friendship, like a summer noon,
Smil'd lovely, as he dealt the sacred boon
Of Sympathy, in nectar steep'd, around
To many a parched lip : the pleasing swoon,
By False Religion breath'd, their senses bound,
While Virtue's mimic train their nodding temples crown'd.

" But soon the heav'nly measure sunk away,
Gradual, exchang'd for sounds of sullen mood,
And tragic notes, commission'd to allay
Young Hope, and freeze at once the rising flood
Of gen'ral mirth ; in vain the choirs renew'd
With sickly stop the baffled Lydian strain :
Perplex'd the dance, and mute the warblers stood,
And all unseemly mixt, the sportive train
Strove to resume their posts, but seem'd to strive in vain.

" Fell Envy here with Emulation strove,
There Pride the spreading flame portentous blew.
While loud, discordant music breath'd above,
Like Eurus' pipe, that swells the storm anew.
Pale Av'rice lurk'd among the madding crew,
And seem'd himself and precious charge to wail,
His native colour chang'd to earthly hue,
While wild conflicting tides by turns assail
The tott'ring wretch, and round their reckless fury deal.

" But Envy from the band unheeded stole,
And near a neighbouring altar fixt her flight,
To mark what various flaws the tide control,
What various passions rose and sunk to night;
Till at the moment fixt, the wrathful sprite,
Wav'd her pale signal thro' the troubled air;
Soon arms were seen to flash a baleful light,
And trumpets' clang was heard, and wild despair
With flight and tumult join'd, deplor'd the waste of war.

" The desolating band Ambition led,
With meteor crest and limbs of giant mold,
The festive troop recoil'd with sudden dread,
From his stern eye that wither'd e'en the bold:
Swift at the glance his glittering bands unfold,
And sweep around the prey with steady ring;
The fainting suppliants by their fears control'd,
Sink at the summons of the greedy king,
While Conscience adds her plagues, and aims her secret sting.

" A second signal mark'd the mourners' fate,
While to a funeral strain advancing slow;
The dread enclosing band deny retreat,
And meditate the long descending blow;
The feeble suppliants sink before the foe,
And feel before it comes the threat'ning sword,
While Av'rice wails with shrill, distinguish'd woe,
And tries with trembling hands to save his hoard,
Clings to his precious charge, and supplicates their lord.

" But now a sprightlier strain was heard to breathe,
And every chord the minstrel Bard awoke,
No more the clarion pour'd the note of death,
No more the suppliants bow'd beneath the stroke;
But all at once in wild meander broke,
Victors and vanquish'd, o'er the changing scene,
And joy above her purple pinions shook;
Blythe Hope was there succinct in amice green,
And Concord struck a league the warring powers between.

" Then all at once from wire and string combin'd,
Melodious blending with the vocal sound,
A mellow mingled strain was heard behind;
The solemn organ fill'd the temple's bound,
Nor yet the lyre's sweet modulations drown'd;
The jocund horn, the pipe, the viol fill
The concert deep, that reach'd the heavenly round,
Where sharp and sweet commixt with magic skill,
And soft and sprightly airs a mingled charm instill.

" The jolly masquers hear with wonder new,
And in a double line their bands extend,
Then matching all in pairs the motley crew,
At once their chequer'd troops amusive blend;
Sorrow with Joy, a new adopted friend,
And Hope with Fear, the mystic measure tread,
Soft Pity deigns her lily hand to lend
To stately Pride, and Love exulting led
Fell Hate, that struggling, seem'd to turn her sickly head.

" Then stern Ambition led with Luxury,
Her victim late, a labyrinthine round,
The feeble partner strove her hand to free
From his strong grasp, and beat the trembling ground
With stagg'ring step, and feet by Terror bound ;
And close to Av'rice link'd, Profusion gay
Fantastic smil'd, while oft the miser frown'd,
And wept his stores that there abandon'd lay,
By his associate flung around in wanton play.

" Scorn seiz'd on Shame, but Shame recoiling fled,
And tim'rous sculk'd among the festive crew,
His mate pursued, but still a secret dread
Freed the mute trembler from his grasp anew :
Thus fir'd by fits the merry madness grew,
And sunk by fits as breath'd the magic blast,
The audience hail'd with shouts the wond'rous view,
And ever wish'd the magic scene to last,
Nor saw, by charms entranc'd, the future in the past.

" And now the self devoted victims raise
A wider theatre, the pomp to hold ;
(Thus Athens in her last luxurious days,
On scenic pleasures spent her hoarded gold,
Profuse, by hollow friends to slavery sold)
Here, lofty Peristyles the wall surround,
And shining valves the ample space unfold,
Where, rang'd on seats, with bending arches crown'd,
Ogygia's longing tribes possess the ample bound.

" No vulgar hand had pictur'd on the roof,
The solemn scenes of an autumnal sky,
Where light and shade with mixt, fantastic woof,
Seem'd o'er the umber'd firmament to vie;
In rival art to cheat the gazer's eye,
With soft commingling hues that scape the sight,
Lest the devoted multitude should spy
The fraud too soon, by clear detecting light,
And save them from the snare, by force or timely flight.

" And now again the moody music blows,
And now again begins the merry dance,
And now they disunite, and now they close,
Now o'er the stage retreat, and now advance,
Quick as the meteors of the north that glance
Around the pole, or skim the welkin sheen;
The audience seem enwrapt in blissful trance
At times, and each Elysian pause between
Loud shouts, and thund'ring hands applaud the jocund scene.

" From shore to shore the wonders of the sight
Were spread at large, and millons throng'd to see
The mystic show, with ever new delight,
Unconscious led to meet their destiny;
For now the train, secure of victory,
With added charms their final ruin plann'd,
Nor fear'd to pay with blackest injury,
The kindness of the self-devoted band,
Where late a naked crew they reach'd the welcome strand.

" Still on the mem'ry dwelt the wond'rous day,
Present or absent still the magic spread,
Thro' Pleasure's mask the passions made their way,
By wonder nurst, and lengthen'd habit fed ;
The oft returning pomp devoid of dread
They saw, and while they drank the living bane,
Within the deep reflected image bred,
And corresponding hues began to stain,
Oft as the scen'ry chang'd, the deep infected brain.

" Each Passion in its turn instinctive flam'd
By magic blown, and touch'd with kindred fire,
Reason expell'd, no more the tumult tam'd,
And Pride, and rankling Hate, and strong Desire ;
Each in her native semblance shone entire,
And still new force the living stream supply'd,
Where mix'd of old the ashes of the sire,
And many a tainted stem that drank the tide,
And many a waving crop their secret force ally'd.

" Short and fallacious were their joys, for soon
The Stygian masquers dropp'd their fair disguise,
And, ranging to a loud Tartarean tune,
Display'd the features of the nether skies.
Now hideous forms on ev'ry side arise,
And threat, with savage looks, their trembling prey ;
Each with Demonian glee his victim eyes,
Their victims stand in horrible dismay,
Irresolute alike to fly or stand at bay.

" A dragon there, voluminous and vast,
Shoots forth his dreadful length, to light reveal'd,
And clasping round his prey, secure and fast,
Keeps him awhile in deadly durance held,
Till all the poison in his veins conceal'd,
Transfus'd through ev'ry faculty, possest
His inmost soul, by social love unquell'd,
And ev'ry look and ev'ry act confest
Envy, a bosom plague, a dire, unsated guest.

" Another like a burning meteor flies,
Crossing the welkin in a summer's night,
And smites the man, till all his marrow fries
With foul concupiscence of low delight:
He longs to join the deep Circean rite,
And emulate the tenants of the sty,
And, all unconscious of his evil plight,
Forgets his lineage from the world on high,
And reckless liv'd of Blame or Scorn's retorted eye.

" O pride of Caledon!* Milesian youth!†
I see your sentence with prophetic eye;
Tho' well ye knew the gen'ral breast to soothe,
Or fire by turns with noblest minstrelsy.
I see you round the ample circus fly,
Each by a seeming Muse of fire pursu'd,
And now ye rest, and now again ye try
A sportive strain, or chant in mournful mood,
Then sink in fitful pangs, by Circe's charms subdu'd.

* Robert Burns. † Thomas Dermody.
The author is far from meaning any comparison between the poetical powers of Burns and Dermody: he only intends to mark the similarity in their fates, as they both fell victims to intemperance.

" Another, by a cold torpedo struck,
Felt the cold venom through his frame dispread,
His lither limbs relaxt, and vacant look,
Shews the pure flame, by spark æthereal fed,
And all its energies for ever fled;
His mournful plight his haggard friends deplore,
But mourn not long, for now, with rising dread,
The hunter's horn, and loud, discordant roar,
Gives signal to the chace, and fast they fly before.

" Springing with savage ramp, and burning eyes,
An herd of tigers leads the chace along;
Each at his long-devoted victim flies,
Who falls not, but with kindred fury stung
The hunters join, and on the flying throng
His vengeance sates with unextinguish'd ire:
Still, at the venom'd bite, the love of wrong,
Malice, and deep revenge, and keen desire
Of discord rages round, like propagated fire.

" And still, at stated times, around the shore
The periodic devastation spreads,
When the recruited bands are ripe once more
To give to penance their devoted heads
For Naiad rites abus'd; and hark! the meads
And pendent woods return the coming cry!—
I too must join the hunt, when Vengeance leads,
For of that sad society am I,
Condemn'd at fated times to lead the chace or fly.

A sound was heard, but not Diana's horn,
And troops were seen, but not of rural Thanes,
That mount the russet hills at dawn of morn,
To chase the village prowler o'er the plains;
But this was like those wild Tartarean strains
Breath'd by Alecto when she woke the fight:
The wretch, sagacious of his coming pains,
Through the wild woods precipitates his flight —
The victims of his fraud pursue, and claim their right.

FINIS.

NOTES

ON THE

WOODMAN'S TALE.

(a) The guardian genius of human life (called AGDISTES by Spenser) is meant by the hermit, whose narrative is continued through the poem. If a different allegorical view might be allowed it may signify the human will; first free, and then reduced to a state of bondage by vicious habits.

(b) Names borrowed from different Greek words signifying water.

(c) MULCIBER. See an account of his banishment and refuge with THETIS. ILIAD 8, 400.

(d) The pernicious qualities of liquids are analyzed and detected by means of other liquids. See, for examples, all the books of chemistry.

(e) Several species of intoxicating and fermenting liquors were early introduced among the northern nations, and afterwards gradually disused. This is all that is meant by this episode.

(f) See the expulsion of BACCHUS from Thrace, by LYCURGUS. Hom. Il. 6, 130.

(g) See the character of the HIPPOMOLGIANS in Homer. Il. 13, 3.

Renown'd for justice and for length of days,
Thrice happy race, that innocent of blood,
From milk innoxious draw their simple food, &c.

See also an account of some of the CAFFARIAN tribes, in Mrs. KINDERSLEY'S Travels.

(h) By this is meant the first introduction of fermented liquors made of bread corn.

(i) AGDISTES here speaks of a race of people yet uncorrupted; their intellects clear from the effects of habitual temperance, and their virtues naturalized from good dispositions and early associations.

(k) It is a melancholy consideration that men of the quickest parts, the most amiable manners, and who are consequently best qualified to shine in society, are most easily seduced by social habits into the snares of habitual intemperance; not only the intellect expands, but fancy itself makes bolder excursions, and wit is brightened for a moment by the collisions which it meets in such an intercourse; habit soon gives new attractions to such fascinating scenes; but to the spirits, when accustomed to such excitements, they soon become necessary, and even stronger stimulations are required, till the strongest are not sufficient. This is the most favourable view with respect to those who suffer nothing but the common effects of those habits, such as chronical diseases, &c. To give a picture of those passions, that are set at large, and impelled beyond the bounds of moderation, by such indulgence, for instance, not only love, but hatred, under all its different appearances and disguises, belongs to another part of the design.

(l) Not only on Bacchanalian songs, but in sober declamations, the effects of intoxicating liquors, in a moderate degree, are defended or applauded, as giving a livelier sense of friendship, benevolence, and all the more refined social feelings: this is, of all others, the most dangerous kind of sophistry, as it is

calculated to produce an effect upon minds, where these feelings prevail to any great extent.

(m) By this and the following, it is only meant to describe the ductility of water, its facility in admitting various mixtures, and its aptitude to assume a variety of forms, such as vapours, &c. The deception of the nymphs, however, may be thought too extravagant a fiction, unless we may be allowed to plead precedents in Parnassus, where personages of a much superior nature are described as often deceived, as Juno by Venus, in the Eneid, Venus by Juno, in the Iliad, Uriel by Satan, in Paradise Lost; but that the operations of inferior agents are often over-ruled, (particularly as these agents are only meant to represent physical powers) to bring about some purposes of a superior nature, is a process which general criticism will allow, under proper restrictions, as it is a representation of the course both of physical and moral nature.

(n) This mythological account of the origin of morasses is introduced, as it leads to the mention of one reigning apology for the free use of fermented and spirituous liquors, viz. the humidity of the soil and climate. It is true that spirituous and fermented liquors produce an insensibility to the common influence of the atmosphere; but that seems to be owing as much to their narcotic, as their stimulative qualities; the former are connected with the latter, and are often the forerunners of the most hopeless maladies that afflict the human race.

(o) The noted bog of Allan, in the centre of Ireland, celebrated by Spenser. See B. 2. Canto 10, Fairy Queen. N. B. For the late rise of morasses, see account by Lord Cromartie, Phil. Trans. Vol. 1.

(p) Belin's vale. A valley near Tullamore, in the King's County, Ireland.

(q) Blomius. The mountain of Slieue Bloom, in the Queen's County, celebrated by Spenser, and so named by him.

Clodio. A river that issues from Slieue Bloom, and passes through the demesne of Lord Charleville, near Tullamore.

(r) The name of a country in the poetical geography of Boiardo.

(s) The son of Comus is represented as gracing his fiction with as much likeness to what had happened as possible, as the surest means to render it successful.

(t) This and the following stanzas contain an allegorical description of an alembic, or still, for the purpose of converting fermented into spirituous liquors. It is to be remembered here that the son of Comus,* (who appears in the character of the devoted victim) is represented as born of Ceres, the mixture of whose remains with the sacred lymph of the Naiads, sublimed by the aid of Vulcan, completes the atonement.

(u) That all the passions are fostered by intemperance is evident, as when the guard of reason is withdrawn, they exert their full vigour, and appear in their genuine colours. Besides, one passion is often, by a sort of magical illusion, made to set off or contrast another, and is, by this means, fermented: for instance, prodigality is encouraged, by setting frugality, under the name of avarice, in a ludicrous light, an example of which might be given in many popular Bacchanalian songs. Many instances of the same kind, the reader's own observation and memory will be able to suggest.

* See the first canto, where Ceres meets with Comus.

FINIS.

MILESIAN TALES.

The following Rhapsody is founded upon a Tradition current in the King's County, in Ireland. The scene described is near the place where the author lived, and is yet marked by the name of the KNIGHT OF FELTRIM. As there are some variations in the account of that event, on which these lines are founded,* the author took the liberty of adding a few circumstances. But there is little doubt of the authenticity of the principal facts, especially of that glorious instance of public spirit, exhibited by the leading character; though in a contest and for a cause, which, if successful, would have been destructive both to our religion and liberty. There is a remarkable coincidence in the machinations and views of France at that period and at present. See p. 127.

* It happened about 1691, some time before the decisive battle of Aughrim.

THE

KNIGHT OF FELTRIM.

Alas! upon this lonely hill
I'm tir'd to view the summer sky;
Though here the timely dews distill,
And there the clouds fantastic fly.

No sylvan bowers I see around,
Where sunbeams play on shelter'd streams,
But fleeting shadows mark the ground,
Chequer'd at times by golden gleams.

O wood of Graigue !* does fate decree
I ne'er must view thy shades again,
Nor e'er beneath a spreading tree
Rest me upon thy flow'ry plain.

In winter cold, and summer's heat,
I sported in thy shelter green,
And heard the driving tempest beat,
Secure beneath thy holly screen.

* In the King's County. The author's present residence is at Rathfryland, in the north of Ireland. From thence there is a fine view of the mountains of Mourne, and an highly cultivated country, but very destitute of any thing like forest scenery.

There oft the throstle and the lark
I tended at their matins gay,
And Sol's last beams I stood to mark,
That from the green glade stole away.

And oft, when twilight woke the gale,
Short panics through my bosom ran,
As the dark boughs that swept the vale
Seem'd each the shadow of a man.

I listen'd oft beneath the shade,
The deep sighs of the midnight air;
Till fancy fill'd with shapes of dread
Began to stir my starting hair.

And e'en when Cynthia, rising clear
The glades disclos'd in prospect bright;
Still seeming whispers crost my ear,
From airy spectres flitting light.

Ah! how I lov'd that vista green
That pierc'd the bosom of the wood,
And down the slope the fairy scene
As in a magic mirror, show'd.

There oft beneath the folding star
The woodmen past in long array,
That seem'd a troop of elves afar
Disbanding at the peep of day.

For still *one* certain path they chose,
And seem'd one fearful glade to shun,
Whether they past at evening's close,
At noon day, or the rising sun.

"Old Maurice* tell, (for thou canst tell)
Why do you take so wide a ring
To shun that glade? a fairer dell
Yet never wore the vest of spring.

"And there I mark how every moon,
In gentle spring or summer sheen,
Still varies to the eye of noon,
The picture of the flowery green.

"And sweetly there the stock-dove plains,
And there the leveret loves to play,
And there the throstle's jocund strains
Are heard at eve and early day.

"Ah! well the stock-dove there may sing
And blackbird trill her notes of woe,
And sweetest flowers of all the spring
Adorn the dust that lies below.

"He was a noble Knight," he said,
"Who FELTRIM own'd, a fair domain,
And here in bloody ambuscade
By William's northern clans was slain.

* An old wood-ranger.

"Shame to my kindred clans,"* I cry'd,
"If thus they wrong'd their noble name!
Oh where was Derry's martial pride,
And Inniskillen's deathless fame?"

"I know not that," the swain return'd,
And hied along the bow'ry path,
While strong desire within me burn'd
To learn the tale of Feltrim's death.

And still I hop'd that party hate,
Perhaps, had forg'd the tragic tale;
Yet wonder'd why his name and fate
Had signaliz'd the woody vale.

Tradition's aid I sought in vain,
To find what virtues grac'd his name,
That seem'd to deck the green domain
With wreaths of everlasting fame.

It was, alas! a random chase,
For when the object promis'd fair
That seem'd to court the warm embrace
It vanish'd soon to empty air.

For truth and falsehood's equal hues
Seem'd in the uncouth tale to glow,
And o'er the drama to diffuse
A gloomy and incongruous show.

* The author is a native of Ulster.

And oft I wish'd the gentle sprite
That tends the poet's ev'ning dream
Would bring once more the scene to light,
And dress it in her magic beam.

One night perplext in thought I lay :—
" O Tuscan bard,"* at last I said,
" Would I could leave the realms of day,
Like thee to converse with the dead.

" As oft I trac'd thy daring flight,
Might I a bolder voyage try,
And, aided by thy viewless sprite,
Catch the dim shadows fleeting by."

The wish was form'd while dewy Sleep
Yet hov'ring o'er my eyelids hung,
And soon her shadows, dark and deep,
The gentle pow'r around me flung.

* Dante.

THE

KNIGHT OF FELTRIM.

PART II.

Yet in the glade methought I stood
With that old swain conversing still,
While the bright lamp of eve renew'd
Its station o'er Killurin Hill.*

When, stepping from the dusky glade
Where Feltrim's verdant grave was seen,
Advanc'd a martial form, array'd
In surcoat of autumnal green.

And on his breast a snow-white rose,
Emblem of ancient York, he bore,
That seem'd its dying leaves to close,
Besprinkled all with drops of gore.

With dumb salute he pass'd me by,
And on the hoary swain he cast
A look from an indignant eye,
Severe as lightning's sudden blast.

* A beautiful eminence on the estate of Lord Digby

To me, amaz'd, he turn'd again,
Mild as the glance of summer's dawn—
"Forgive me, that misjudging swain
Had drawn my short resentment on.

"For I, though absent long, can tell
Better than he, the warrior's fate,
And by what treacherous hands he fell,
And why he sought the woody strait."

Surpris'd I stood, but not dismay'd,
As oft upon the verdant ground
And oft upon the conscious glade
He cast his eyes in thought profound.

"Often you sought this quiet vale,
And here your earthly cares resign'd,
While gentle Twilight, rising pale,
Her dusky mantle drew behind.

"Yet wonder not, if Fate deny'd
Till now, such visions to your view,
Oft as you pac'd the forest side
Where spectres swept the midnight dew.

"Yet then you started as you past,
At seeming voices, whisp'ring near,
And oftentimes you stood aghast
At forms that seem'd the brood of fear.

" 'Twas something more than fancy's power
That form'd the shapes and shook the grove,
My accents thrill'd along the bower,
My hands the transient visions wove.

" Behold, nor tremble when you know
That I am Feltrim's airy shade,
No northern ranger laid me low,
Nor British arm, nor Belgic blade.

" Thus often on that dismal night
That saw my doom, I met you here,
And oft had brought the deed to light,
But still I spar'd thy trembling ear.

" But now the years are come around
That seem the tragic tale to claim,
For Obloquy's dire notes have drown'd
Much of my country's ancient fame.

" And obloquy may be your lot,
Because you chuse a theme so low,
When other bards, with soaring thought,
Can only feel for regal woe.

" When James forsook Ierne's strand,
By heaven-sent fear and mortal might
Expell'd, a brave Milesian band
Still in the west upheld his right.

" His aid the crafty Bourbon lent—
Ah! little did his victims know
The Gallic monarch's dark intent,
A seeming friend, but deadly foe.

" For freedom and their ancient faith
He seem'd with them the sword to wield,
But deep destructive plans beneath
This gen'rous mask the Gaul conceal'd.

" Mistaken men! they proudly spurn'd
The blessings which the victor brought,
And years on years the island mourn'd
The lessons here by Gallia taught.

" The moon had often wax'd and wan'd
Since Boyne with native crimson flow'd,
Yet Sarsfield still the cause maintain'd,
Adorn'd with laurels well bestow'd.

" E'en in the mother-city's bound,
Where Nassau's party now prevail'd,
Those who the cause of Stuart own'd,
His dawning hopes in secret hail'd.

" Nor were their energies confin'd
To hopes and ineffectual prayer,
But all with eager zeal combin'd
The glory of the cause to share.

" Steel was deny'd ; but yet remain'd
An anchor of securer hold
In storms of war, that oft sustain'd
The wreck of states ; all-powerful gold.

" The friends of James, by gen'ral vote,
Resolv'd by gold the cause to aid,
And next debate, with anxious thought,
By whom the gift should be convey'd.

" On me they fix'd in evil hour ;
I took the charge, by fate impell'd,
For oft amidst the hostile power
I past, in various garb conceal'd.

" Yet, tho' all stratagems were mine,
And ev'ry military art,
Presumption led me to consign
The myst'ry to a leaky heart.

" An envoy to the western powers
I sent, a faithful guard to bring,
And meet me where yon ruin* towers
Majestic o'er the sacred spring.

" For there a grave and holy train,
Had left their worldly cares behind,
And all their cares employ'd to gain
The holy palms to saints assign'd.

* Monastery of the Holy Cross, or St. Francis, at Killeigh, King's County. The author, though no friend to monastic institutions, or the principles to which, too often, they owed their origin, yet was induced to pay this short tribute to the character of this *particular* society, which had been the object of traditionary praise.

" Within that hospitable seat
I meant my weary limbs to rest,
This spot was fix'd the guard to meet,*
By Sarsfield sent, that rul'd the west.

" My confidant, a secret slave,
(O luckless chance!) to Cupid's snare,
A billet to my envoy gave,
Directed to a rural fair.

" A cypher, and a countersign,
In terms obscure my message told,
Lest to the foe some chance malign,
Our secret purpose might unfold.

" Part of my secret he conceal'd,
But part disclos'd, by love betray'd,
The guard, the journey he reveal'd,
But hid the CHARGE by me convey'd.

" Not love alone, but jealous dread
Of rivalry, his heart distrest,
And thus he meant to prove the maid,
If other love her heart possest.

" Th' impatient lover nam'd the night
When he could reach Saint Francis' fane,
And pray'd her by the nuptial rite,
To end at once his am'rous pain.

* Killeigh is about forty-five miles from Dublin, and about thirty from Aughrim.

" Unhappy love, what evils sprung
From such a small and scanty source,
Discord and treason, hate and wrong,
From thence deriv'd their baleful course.*

" Mean-time, expectant of the day
I told the tardy moments o'er,
For still some unforeseen delay
Withheld from me the promis'd store.

" At length the time expected long
Arriv'd, and ready for my flight,
I waited till the sky was hung
With the dun robe of welcome night.

" Just then arriv'd a wand'ring friar,
Who seem'd with toilsome travel spent,
A note he bore, of import dire,
By the Franciscan prior sent.

" It told how midst the holy band
A messenger of heavenly wrath
Had rais'd his far-destroying hand,
And fill'd the cells with noisome death.

" For me, a safe asylum nigh
He nam'd, where liv'd a loyal swain,
And join'd assurance to supply,
By Sarsfield aid, a guardian train.

* See p. 134.

" His faith he pledg'd, lest causeless fear
My purpos'd journey should delay,
To station in the forest near
The band, before the destin'd day.

" Now our disguises we prepare,
To scape the notice of the foe,
And schemes devis'd with anxious care,
Unheeded thro' their haunts to go.

" With hasty foot the place we past,
And many an English watch beguil'd,
And, when the light began to waste,
We enter'd Allan's lonely wild.

" We rested there (for still aloof
We kept from ev'ry public way)
Beneath a poor, but friendly roof,
Expectant of the coming day.

" A mystic vision came before
The dawn, with seeming kind presage
From earth I seem'd aloft to soar,
Thro' many a bright æthereal stage.

" And solemn choirs were heard to sing
In Francis' hallow'd walls below,
And the wild woods began to ring
With curses mixt with notes of woe.

" And as I rose, a golden cloud
Rolling around me, seem'd to spread,
And soon a garland, red as blood,
Was seen to hover o'er my head.

" Next day o'er bog and moor we rode,
And now the hills appear'd in sight,
That hid Saint Francis calm abode,
Renown'd for many a holy rite.

" The woods behind in yellow vest
Were ting'd by Sol's descending car,
By Nature's hand profusely drest,
They spread a pomp of shade afar.

" Ah ne'er till then did rural view
Of wood or lawn such transport yield,
What caus'd my joy I little knew,
Or what these smiling glades conceal'd.

" With welcome bland, and aspect kind,
The swain receiv'd us as his door,
He seem'd a rude but honest hind,
And guileless as the race of yore.

" Say is the guard already here?"
' Last night they came;' the senior said,
' They dare not in the day appear,
' But lie in Sylvan ambuscade.

" 'Now rest your weary limbs with me,
  ' And take what fare I can bestow,
' Soon will you find a passage free,
  ' In spite of the surrounding foe.'

" The Friar was gone, and still we sate
  Preparing for the hour of rest;
When a loud knocking at the gate
  Announc'd an unexpected guest.

" We heard him at our host enquire;
  The ready host our chamber show'd;
He clos'd the door, a message dire
  Upon his meaning visage glow'd.

" He like a forester was drest,
  In russet garb succinct and plain,
And his quick kindling eye confest
  A dubious joy, chastiz'd by pain.

" ' Dost thou not know me yet?' he said,
  My pale companion stood amaz'd;
' Dost thou not know thy plighted maid?'
  Still on her form he wildly gaz'd.

" ' Repress your feelings now,' she cry'd,
  Nor let a single word betray
Your thoughts, for now we must provide
  The means to bear you safe away.

" O then, at first with horror struck,
I learn'd the fraud that hemm'd me round;
And how my fatal faith mistook
The fatal glade for friendly ground.

" E'en where the sage Franciscan train
Long persever'd in hallow'd toil
The neighb'ring woods, a band profane
Had long possest, who liv'd on spoil.

" Here scenes of violence and wrong,
Infected of the midnight air,
And often their unhallow'd song
Disturb'd the hymn and rising prayer.

" Scarce were the sacred walls secure,
(For God nor king the ruffians own'd)
Much less the peasant's humble door,
His wattled cot, and rustic mound.

" My messenger, in evil hour,
Among those wolves of Allan fell;
They led him to their central bower,
With many a loud discordant yell.

" They found the cypher, but in vain
To learn its secret meaning try'd;
Nor could the hapless youth explain
The figures which their skill defy'd.

" But when the fatal note they found,
Sent to the fair Ophalian maid ;
Too much of my design it own'd,
Conjecture's help the rest pourtray'd.

" The journey and the meeting guard,
The lodgment with the hallow'd train,
Some mighty mystery declar'd,
And hopes perhaps of golden gain.

" They sent a dire unfeeling crew
To find the fair, and bear away ;
To whom, with nuptial bliss in view,
The lover nam'd the happy day.

" Alas! that day the youth design'd
To end at once his hopes and fears ,
Clos'd in a ruffian's haunt she pin'd,
And saw the sun go down in tears.

" Yet nought she would or could diclose
To point them to their richer prize,
Her seeming scorn enhanc'd her woes,
Her want of knowledge seem'd disguise.

" A forged note they made her sign,
To lure their victim to their snare,
*And hallow'd hands, with art malign,
Seem'd the black artifice to share.

* See p. 130, l. 13

" To save her honour, she obey'd,
For he that led the savage train,
E'en by that bribe was scarcely sway'd,
His lawless passion to restrain.

" And something too like genuine love
His barbarous habitudes o'ercame,
And round the lovely captive wove,
A spell that check'd his raging flame.

" ' Think not,' she cry'd, ' to brave your fate,
' Or force with valour to withstand ;
' You may avoid the fierce debate
' If you resign what they demand.

" ' Resolve in haste, the ruffian band
' In yonder forest wait the time ;
' When, issuing from a distant stand,
' Their fellows come to share their crime.

" ' Gold is your chief protector here ;
' But who my Hubert's life can save ;
' Soon will a rival's cruel spear
' Be rais'd to mark him for the grave.

" ' The means are mine to speed your flight,'
' No,' sternly smiling, Hubert cry'd,
' No never while I see the light
' Will I forsake my master's side.

" ' Twas I that led him to the snare ;
  ' Shall I forsake him in his need ?
' Let fate her sharpest plagues prepare,
  ' I'll never leave him—'tis decreed.'

" ' Yes—if it be thy master's will !'
  I cry'd, for now the sacred swell
Of honour seem'd my heart to fill,
  And every dastard fear expell.

" Not holy priest, nor gifted bard,
  Such inspiration felt before ;
That thrilling charm my bosom shar'd,
  Which rais'd the patriots souls of yore.

" ' I charge you by your plighted faith,
  ' And as you love your master's fame,
' Avoid the needless stroke of death,
  ' And live to vindicate my name.

" ' The means this faithful maid has giv'n
  ' This precious charge to bear away :
' To Sarsfield haste,' protect ye heaven,
  ' And from the robbers snatch their prey.

" ' Nay scruple not,' (for still in pause,
  By wild conflicting passion torn,
He stood) ' to serve the public cause
  ' A soldier holds his life in scorn.

" Shall pining want or mutiny
In gallant Sarsfield's camp appear?
For want of this, O let me die
Before such tidings reach my ear.

" Resolve!—for, by the powers above,
With life alone will I forego;
This precious charge! no powers can move
This hand a recreant sign to shew.

" With horror struck the damsel stood—
' What ruin have I caus'd,' she said;
' Ah! would to heaven my forfeit blood
Your ransom long ago had paid.

" ' But oh! the moments press to part,
' For soon the deadly horn will blow!'
Down Hubert kneel'd, with breaking heart,
As doom'd himself to meet the foe.

" Some treasure round his waist I bound,
The rest the faithful damsel bore—
' Now haste, before the bugle sound,
' To cross the wood and gain the moor.

" ' Martyr of honour's cause, adieu,'
Hubert exclaim'd, and prest my hand;
Then with his faithful maid withdrew
To the false peasant's secret stand.

" ' I claim your gratitude,' she cry'd;
' My father sav'd your life of old:
' Let this youth pass the forest side;
' Your masters want not blood, but gold.

" ' The prize is theirs; but well I know
' What dangers o'er his head impend,
' From spite, that fills a private foe,
' Unless your instant aid you lend.'

" The suit prevail'd; the steed was brought;
They mount, and leave me to my fate:
The lover, by the damsel taught,
Pass'd unobserv'd the woody strait.

" And now the bugle's solemn call,
Announcing loud a conflict new,
Was heard along the sylvan hall,
And call'd to arms the ruffian crew.

" Yet unappall'd the sound I heard;—
No trumpet, at the games of old,
With sweeter note the victor cheer'd,
When pæans loud his triumphs told.

" Thick flashing to the sable sky,
I saw their piny torches glare;
And soon the crew, with savage cry
Assembling, to the lodge repair.

" But oh ! the flame expanding bright,
Kindled by virtue's inward charm,
Seem'd to eclipse their feeble light,
And wither ev'ry powerless arm.

" Though soon to meet the ruffian's arm—
Though clos'd with many a fatal gin,
Still mightier than the loud alarm
I heard the sov'reign voice within.

" With brandish'd fire and lifted steel,
Onward the king of terrors came ;
His ministers around me wheel,
Like hunters to their sylvan game.

" Yet, all-ferocious as they were,
Something of deep supernal awe
Their fury turn'd, with check severe,
As if the seated judge they saw.

" The savage leader claim'd the prize,
With hollow voice and falt'ring tongue.
' Follow ! I'll shew you where it lies,'
I said, and march'd before the throng.

" Through pathless woods and hollow glades,
Dependent on my word, they past,
While I with studious care delay'd
The search, to favour Hubert's haste.

" At length they reach'd yon solemn dell—
' Halt here !' I cried, ' your labours close,
' Bid all your empty hopes farewell,
No prize remains for honour's foes.

" ' She's here ! O mark her dread commands ;
' She courts you to returning faith ;
' She bids you join your country's bands,
' And gain the bright Milesian wreath.'

" ' Where is your gold ?' the chief enquir'd.
' O far beyond your reach,' I cry'd.
' Tell or you die,' with fury fir'd,
He said ; ' this hand shall quell your pride.'

" ' But where is he, the traitor slave,
' Whose am'rous lines your purpose told ?
' I seiz'd his plighted bride—she gave
' The hope to seize the royal gold.

" ' That slave,' I said, ' is far away.'—
With haggard look and alter'd tone,
Where fury mix'd with wild dismay,
He ask'd me—' Did she fly alone ?'

" ' Enquire no more—my fate I know.'
' And thou shalt meet it soon,' he cry'd ;
' You might have scap'd the fatal blow,
' But vengeance, now, and love decide.'

" His word was follow'd by his lance:
A speedy blow dissolv'd my tie
To earth, and quick as lightning's glance
I mounted up the bending sky.

" And choirs I pass'd who sung on high—
' *Another joins our slender train*
' *From yonder orb, a rare supply,*
' *For ages often hop'd in vain.*'

" Then Curtius,* like a stream of light,
Along the vast of æther sped,
Swift as his plunge in endless night,
And a long train of spirits led.

" And brighter still the Decian pair*
In fiery circles round me flew,
While wond'rous prospects, op'ning fair,
Seem'd to expand my mental view.

" That cause for which I paid my life
Seems now a poor ignoble fray,
Where brothers bled in civil strife,
To Gallic fraud a willing prey.

" I trac'd the fatal gold along
Till Sarsfield gain'd the welcome freight:
I saw the foreign leader† stung
With native pride and Gallic hate."

* Well-known names of those who devoted themselves for their country.

† St. Ruth, who fell at Aughrim. His dissension with General Sarsfield was thought to have had no small influence on the fortunes of that day.

" 'Twas hence that first dissention grew,
While both advanc'd his rival claim
The gift to share, till Discord blew
The trivial quarrel to a flame.

" This feud on Aughrim's dreadful plain
Its last and direst poison shed;
But peace, and freedom's gentle reign,
Succeeded, as the furies fled.

" And now adieu: the clarion shrill
Of Chanticleer salutes the morn;
No accent drear shall meet your ear
Where sleeps my dust by yonder thorn."

THE

DEAD MAN'S BELT.

L

Founded on an Incident that happened in the North of Ireland about the year 1705. The cave, into which the tide comes, at the bottom of Slieue Donard, is still called Armour's Hole, from the name of the family whose crimes and misfortunes are the subject of the following tale.

THE

DEAD MAN'S BELT.

A LEGENDARY TALE.

" ' We must procure a dead man's belt
  ' Of one that was in battle slain,
' To cure the woes and pungent throes
  ' Of her that lies in child-bed pain.

" ' And we must get his lifeless arm
  ' On highthe magic torch to rear
' To counterwork the hateful charm
  ' That hinders her the babe to bear.

" ' Then soon the loud-voic'd storm shall rise
  ' To sound a welcome to the boy,
' Commission'd from the nether skies
  ' The hostile orders to destroy.

" ' When the returns of blooming May
  ' Shall raise his youth to manhood's prime,
' The mourning CROSS shall own his sway,
  ' Degraded from its height sublime.

" ' Then mould'ring palaces and fanes
  ' Shall mark his deeds from sea to sea,
' And desolation sweep the plains
  ' Where he contends for mastery.'

" Then ruddy grew the midnight moon,
  Tho' erst as clear as silver bright,
And many a strange and dismal tune
  Was heard amid the vault of night.

" The Rafters all a tremor felt—
  With feet of wind, and eyes of flame,
Bearing the lifeless arm and belt
  Instant the wayward sister came.

" And soon the roaring storm was heard,
  And fast the clouds began to fly
And soon to every point it veer'd—
  Then lessen'd to an infant's cry.

" Again the moody music play'd;
  The wayward three the spindle twirl'd;
As thence the fairy king convey'd
  The infant terror of the world.

" At his command the rocks expand,
  And open'd wide a downward way;
His palace, bright with magic light,
  Disclos'd beneath a mimic day.

" To tell their feast description fails,
For mortal eye hath ne'er survey'd
The scenes of these sequester'd vales
Where Merlin's mould'ring bones are laid.

" Now, when the genial feast was o'er,
His wish the royal fairy spoke,
And summon'd soon the matron hoar,
A nd thus the solemn silence broke.

" Whence was that deadly belt procur'd?
'What corse bestow'd the lifeless arm
That thus the infant's life assur'd
When late expos'd to deadly harm?"

THE

DEAD MAN'S BELT.

PART II.

" A MELANCHOLY man, alone,
Beneath old Donard's* mountain hoar
Sate musing on the shadowy cone
That fell the distant valley o'er.

" For now the midnight moon arose,
And westward shot her slanting beam,
When the pale mourner told his woes
To the rude rocks and chiding stream.

" ' Yon eagle, soaring o'er my head,
' By rapine lur'd, and nurst with blood,
' Yet ne'er forgets his callow bed,
' Nor scants his infant's daily food.

" ' In vain yon channel'd rocks oppose
' That sounding flood, that hastes to bring
' The treasure of the mountain snows
' To cloath anew the coming spring.

* Slieue Donard, in the county of Down.

" ' The more his progress they impede,
' And seem his current to delay,
' More furious grown, with giant speed
' He thunders down his foamy way.

" ' But, ah ! a stepdame's deadly breath
' Can check fair nature's genial course ;
' Her hated power, as strong as death,
' Can freeze affection in its source.

" ' Ah! gentle love ! is this the boon
' That on your vassals you bestow,
' And must I live to tell the moon
' A nightly tale of cureless woe ?

" ' Last night a suppliant I apply'd—
' He bade me seek my fate elsewhere ;
' That rock could soon my fate decide,
' Suspended in the dusky air.

" ' But I must live to pity still—
' And I must live to vengeance too ;
' My wife, my children, cross my will,
' And she, that fiend, her art shall rue.

" ' Was it the wayward power of grief,
' Or some strange viewless hand, that led
' My steps so far to seek relief
' In scenes of deep nocturnal dread ?

" ' Alas! by sudden weight opprest,
  ' My vigour seems to melt away,
' Beneath this rock a place of rest
  ' I'll find, till Phosphor leads the day.'

" He slept; but still his fancy woke,
  The former scene remain'd in sight,
The long, deep shades, by moonlight broke,
  That fell from many a neighb'ring height.

" In vision he beheld a dame
  Thorough the long heath wading slow;
Soon to his mossy bed she came,
  And thus began to soothe his woe.

" ' Have you forgot, when, in despair,
  ' You lately sought for viewless aid,
' No heedless spirit heard your prayer,
  ' For I was present when you pray'd.

" ' I watch'd your grief, I spy'd your flight,
  ' Up to the lonely wilds alone,
' I saw you tir'd of life and light,
  ' I heard your deep, despairing groan.

" ' 'Twas I who spy'd the dark intent
  ' That rankled in your stepdame's soul,
' When by the purpos'd WILL* she meant
  ' To govern all with full control.

* Viz. by which the father, by her machinations, intended to disinherit his son, for a marriage which had offended him.

" ' The project yet is rendered vain,
  ' The testament in embryo lies,
' Yet every art and subtle train
  ' To warp your father's mind she tries.

" ' More direful means she now intends,
  ' But we shall counterwork her wiles,
' If your implicit faith depends
  ' On me, you soon shall mar her toils.

" ' To-morrow night, by Hesper's light,
  ' When Cynthia swells the flowing tide,
' Where the deep cave admits the wave,
  ' Meet me by Donard's sea-beat side.

" ' Nor yet on Donard's sea-beat side,
  ' Nor in the cave I mean to be,
' You'll spy a pinnace on the tide,
  ' Deep moor'd beneath the shelving sea.

" ' But you shall meet your father there,
  ' Fast by the margin of the deep,
' There he enjoys the ev'ning air,
  ' When Hesper twinkles o'er the steep.

" ' There try his stubborn soul to bend,
  ' If aught that marble heart can move,
' And with his steadfast hate contend,
  ' With all the strength of filial love.

" ' If your entreaties nought avail,
' If still his pride your tears withstand,
' My pinnace soon, with easy sail,
' Shall waft him hence to fairy land.

" ' The lessons taught in fairy land,
' Shall soon his constancy subdue,
' And when he sees his native strand,
' Shall learn to think and act anew.

" ' If he resist, do then compell
' His steps reluctant to the shore,
' And when the pinnace leaves its cell,
' Without compunction hurls him o'er.'

THE

DEAD MAN'S BELT.

PART III.

" Dan Phœbus touch'd the western brim,
And backward to the dusky shore
The purple radiance seem'd to swim,
That settled on the wave before.

" In cloudy cincture now he set:
The coming tide, in twilight gray,
With deep and solemn cadence beat
The long shores of the ample bay.

" The billows as they sought the shore,
Where yawn'd the cave with hideous gloom,
Seem'd, with a melancholy roar,
Oft to denote a wat'ry tomb.

" But fearless of a wat'ry tomb,
The father pac'd the rocky mound,
Tho' night and treason's double gloom
Now hover'd o'er the fatal ground.

" But never yet, on wings of wind,
Two spirits met with more amaze,
Whom distant worlds have long confin'd,
Sever'd by half the mundane space.

" Nor on the last decisive day
Will hostile souls each other view
With deeper hate and more dismay,
When first they hear the sentence due,

" Than here beneath the mountain's van,
The meeting son and father shew'd,
Pale rancour mark'd each visage wan,
Which soon with indignation glow'd.

" But strong compunction, like the shock
That set the prison'd waters free,
Subdu'd the rebel's heart of rock.
And low he sunk on bended knee.

" ' O father, father, yet relent !
' And spare my infant race,' he said,
' Are all the stores of nature spent,
' And pity in your bosom dead.'

" Alas ! he little knew how vain
That breast with pity to inspire,
The Demon in his stepdame's brain
Had steel'd him with relentless ire.

" A forged note, of import dire,
She had suborn'd a slave to show,
That promis'd him an ample hire,
If he would lay his father low.

" ' Such mercy as you meant for me,'
The father cry'd, ' you now should meet,
' And find your doom in yonder sea,
' Whose waves the hollow cavern beat.

" ' You never can be now forgiven!
' You never shall my succour know!
' I have a dreadful oath in heaven,
' By all above and all below.

" ' What do I feel?—does heaven and hell
' Within my bosom ebb and flow?
' What viewless powers my hand impell,
' What bids the purpos'd deed forego?'

" And he look'd east, and he look'd west,
In hopes the promis'd boat to spy,
At last he thought before the cave
He saw the skiff at mooring lie.

" ' Go, parricide!' the father cry'd,
' And never let me see thee more:'
' I go,' the sullen son reply'd,
' And slowly sought the murm'ring shore.

" ' Yet, father, take my last adieu,
  ' Yon pinnace wafts me hence away.'
Fate to the shore the father drew,
  That hung tremendous o'er the bay.

" The sire advanc'd, *he* stepp'd behind,
  By sudden rage with strength supplied,
And where the steepy stairs declin'd,
  Deep plung'd him in the roaring tide.

" But oh! to see the father fall,
  His grey hair streaming in the breeze,
How did the sight his heart appal,
  And bid the vital current freeze!

" For sudden light was seen to wave,
  And laughter loud was heard below,
Thro' the long winding of the cave,
  Succeeded soon by shrieks of woe.

" Soon from th' spot the murth'rer fled,
  Along the margin of the bay,
The shadows of remorse and dread
  Seem'd to pursue in long array.

" And now a more than mortal hand
  The character of guilt imprest
Upon his face, an hideous brand,
  To every meeting eye confest.

" But mark the crisis of his fate—
His stepdame, seiz'd by death's control,
That night, expiring, told the weight
Of guilt that charg'd her sinking soul.

" Soon was he found, and soon arraign'd,
Nor did he long the fact deny,
And soon his corse (as law ordain'd)
Hung, a sad spectacle, on high.

" 'Twas there the FATED BELT I found,
And thence I brought the lifeless arm,
My art thro' many a yearly round,
Have kept the reliques free from harm.

" And here is many a potent weed,
The best that grows beneath the sky,
Now brew the magic bath with speed,
And in the laver plunge the boy.

" Now waft him to his home again,
And bring the shape that fills his place,
And let them bear him to the fane,
And mutter o'er the spells of grace.

" Loud anthems fill the sacred porch,
To hail the formidable boy,
That little hand will lift a torch,
The lofty fabric to destroy.

Note on the Speech of the Fairy.

This whole speech of the fairy is intended to give some instances of the sophistry of the passions. Slight exertions of duty are, on many occasions, found sufficient to satisfy our self-partiality, when we overlook much greater deviations from virtue, as was probably the case with this unfortunate young man, who did not make proper allowances for his father's resentment at an instance of disobedience in the point of marriage. It is disagreeable to enter into the "dreadful motions of a murtherer's thoughts," but it is not improbable that they, sometimes, in their previous deliberations, strengthen their horrid resolutions, by reasoning thus with themselves: "Either there is no life after this, and then I free my victim from the unavoidable ills of life, or if there be another state of conscious existence, I will give the means of an eligible change." Somewhat like this I have endeavoured to express allegorically.

These observations may be applied to every gradation of guilt; for, by the usual operation of self-deception, the advantages accruing to the perpetrator by the crime, are magnified to an undue degree, while the injuries which they inflict on individuals, or society, are diminished in the same proportion, by the magic of a disturbed fancy.

THE MOON-FLOWER.

The following stanzas are founded on an event which occurred many years ago to a young man, engaged in an adventure similar to that which is related below. The invitation, the ocular deception, and the incident to which it gave cause, are mentioned in the records of village tradition: the two former are generally believed, the last is undoubtedly true. To these circumstances the author has ventured to add a little machinery, not so much for the sake of embellishing his narrative, as of setting the moral in somewhat of a stronger light.

THE

MOON-FLOWER.

A LEGENDARY TALE.

YET dwells a power in earth and air,
And in the waters deep and clear,
That oft (as poets sing) declare
Approaching joy, or grief severe.

The morning rose, serene and still,
Dan Phœbus ting'd the twilight pale,
And Mescan's* mount and Spelga's hill
For gold exchang'd their purple veil.

Sweet Ellen rose from troubled sleep,
Conflicting passions vex'd her breast;
But shorter shades from Morna's steep
Had fall'n before she rose from rest.

She meant to frown, she meant to chide
Her love, but oft her heart rebell'd;
Yet Passion strove in vain to hide
The snares that Reason's lamp reveal'd.

* Two of the mountains of Mourne.

For Fancy late to Reason's aid
Her shadowy retinue had brought,
A morning dream her soul dismay'd,
And darken'd still the seat of thought.

Soon to the dewy bank she past,
Now glowing red, now woeful wan,
And many an anxious glance she cast
Along the windings of the Ban.

'Twas not to see the smiling farms
With green and gold enamell'd gay,
Encircl'd in his azure arms,
Where'er his wanton waters stray.

'Twas not to see the finny fry,
Quick glancing from the limpid wave,
To snatch aloft the roving fly,
And plunge it in a wat'ry grave.

It was a fav'rite youth to spy,
Whose image warm'd her bosom still,
That oft she trac'd, with anxious eye,
The winding path that skirts the hill.

Sweet Ellen to her garden goes,
To gain a more commanding view,
No sweeter place the crocus knows,
Or violet, mark'd with streaky blue.

There, hov'ring o'er the lofty hedge,
A goldfinch chas'd, in wanton play,
His love, along the water's edge,
Or thro' the privet's bloomy spray.

But soon an hawk was seen to dart,
And stop the lovers' swift career ;
It struck a pang to Ellen's heart,
And trickling fell a boding tear.

But soon her grief was chang'd to fear,
Her cheek was blanch'd with pale surprise,
Tho' stainless was the welkin clear,
And not a vapour ting'd the skies,

Yet darker than a thunder cloud,
Appear'd the gloom that spread below,
And seem'd with dragon wing to shroud
The passing river's quiet flow.

And now against the breeze it came,
Now on the wind it seem'd to sail,
Tho' Phœbus sent his shafts of flame
Refulgent over hill and dale.

Slow moving round the hill it past,
O'er blooming fields that seem'd to fade
Beneath the viewless cause, that cast
O'er the gay scene a rueful shade.

At length away it vanish'd quite,
The dread impression stay'd behind,
As gloomy as primæval night,
In pensive Ellen's startled mind.

For she had dream'd she saw a dame
That rul'd the world of liquid fire,
Display a robe of woven flame,
And thus address the ardent choir.

'Attend, ye salamanders, soon
'To join your choirs, a son of clay
'Shall come, before the choral tune
'Of larks salute the setting day.

'For he has nurst the subtle spark
'Of sin, till to a flame 'tis grown,
'And heaven's commission'd Genii mark
'The self-devoted for our own.

'Tis needful too a nymph to save,
'Half tangled in his fatal snare,
'She late was heard their help to crave,
'And they have listen'd to her pray'r.'

Yet Ellen watch'd the circling sun,
And mark'd the dial's moving shade,
Religion now the conquest won,
And love again her heart betray'd.

'Is this a mark of freedom given,
'Is yon an emblem of the snare
'Removing, by the will of heaven
'From me, of danger scarce aware?

'Whate'er it be, oh heaven defend
'A soul unworthy of thy love,
'Nor let my stubborn heart contend,
'Whene'er thou deign'st that soul to move.'

THE

MOON-FLOWER.

PART II.

But not repress by mental gloom,
The lovers rose alert and gay,
His spy had told that from her home
The mother* past at early day.

For often there, at early day,
Or ev'ning close, in mean disguise,
The spoiler linger'd for his prey,
Bent on seduction or surprise.

A fraudful message he had sent,
To lure the matron from her charge,
Of a dear friend, by sickness spent,
Ling'ring on life's extremest verge.

Next morn he strode his red roan steed,
But left his faithful dog behind;
Presageful of the fate decreed,
His moanings seem'd to load the wind.

* Of Ellen.

Along the river's winding side
The lover's path alluring lay,
'Haste, haste, my red roan steed,' he cry'd,
'The watchful guard is far away.'

But now along the winding way
An hasty sound of feet was heard,
And mounted on a dapple grey,
A fellow traveller appear'd.

And lo! the day was overcast,
Yet still the sun-beams fring'd the cloud,
As o'er the Ban the darkness past,
Short gleams the moving mirror show'd.

With dumb salute the stranger bow'd,
His aspect frore the youth dismay'd,
No ghost in visionary shroud
So little signs of earth display'd.

He look'd with beamless eye malign,
Deep ting'd with rancour's sickly green,
And on his cheek the lurid sign
Of a deep canker'd soul was seen.

The ample beaver was of blue
That sate upon his faded brow,
A water-lily, wan of hue,
Was seen above the brim to bow.

And, figur'd on his rich cymar,
That cover'd all his steed behind,
Were scenes of elemental war,
By more than human skill design'd.

There, as when light thro' chaos gleam'd,
The sun was seen with muffled eye
Behind an hovering cloud, that seem'd
A dragon in a hazy sky.

And from its wings the torrent flow'd,
And down the rocks they seem'd to roar,
And still the spreading flood devour'd
The treasures of the wasted shore.

And flocks and folds, and drowning swains,
Promiscuous drove along the tide,
The bridge, in vain, the flood detains,
The torrent whelms its lofty pride.

Beneath his robe, his curious mail
The stranger show'd, a dress complete,
Where pearl, and shell, and golden scale,
With rays alternate seem'd to meet.

A polish'd globe of chrystal bright,
Slung by his side, return'd the day,
And living splendors, swift as sight,
Within its verge were seen to play.

'Look up, look up, unhappy youth!
'Oh gaze not on that chrystal round;
'The charmed spell is void of truth,
'Your senses are by magic bound.

'Look up, look up, unhappy boy!
'And mark the gloom above his head;
'See how it flits along the sky
'By terrible attraction led!'

THE

MOON-FLOWER.

PART III.

Why do you view that chrystal clear?
'Tis nothing but a childish toy;
Yet tho' Titania * held it dear,
She changed for a favourite boy.

But now the favourite boy is lost,
For he was born of mortal strain;
And I must roam from coast to coast,
Another minion to obtain.

For I am of that Elfin race
That rules the wat'ry world below,
And I by fair Titania's grace
This magic mirror can bestow.

A wizard form'd in days of yore
This amulet with curious skill,
And gave it power the heart to hold,
And gain a conquest o'er the will.

* Queen of the Fairies.

'That fair will never be unkind
'That from her lover gains the prize;
'The full dominion o'er her mind
'This glittering talisman supplies.'

'Oh could I view that crystal toy,'
The am'rous youth impatient cry'd—
'You may awhile your wish enjoy,'
He said, and took it from his side.

And there he view'd, or thought he view'd,
The triumphs of the wat'ry race,
Whom nature's bounds in vain withstood,
The powers that shock her solid base.

The tribes of earth he there beheld,
Deep welt'ring in the rising wave,
Whose fury every moment swell'd,
Threat'ning to all a wat'ry grave.

And there he saw a giant's hand,*
Uplifted o'er the billows high;
It bore a lovely child to land,
That seem'd to prop the louring sky.

He saw the hand that oar'd along
The mighty father to the shore,
A lion there, by famine stung,
Waiting the banquet, seem'd to roar.

* Alluding to the picture of the deluge, by Lowe, where a scene like this is exhibited.

But when the sire the savage spy'd,
With rampant rage that spurn'd the steep;
His nerveless arm its aid deny'd
And both were buried in the deep.

But other scenes succeeded soon
Of solemn grots and pearly caves,
And vistas, where the rising moon
Sprinkled her glories on the waves.

And there the nymphs where seen to sport,
And lave their limbs in wanton play,
While o'er the arches of their court
Swift-crossing rainbows seem'd to stray.

And there he spy'd the gemmy spar
Of purest lymph, by nature made;
Where many a bright and twinkling star
The pendent roof in light array'd.

Then soon appear'd a sylvan scene,
Where Dryad forms were seen to feed
With vital sap the scions green,
And thro' the spiral mazes lead.

And with the branches as they spread
Aerial forms were seen to play;
And with a nameless spell to wed
The morning dew, and solar ray.

Others were seen on level wing,
The vapours wafting to the skies;
While rivers, lakes, and streaming springs
Sent up amain the moist supplies.

'What pleasures would I not resign
'To gain that glass,' the lover cry'd;
The sage return'd—'It may be thine,
'Hear the conditions, then decide.'

'Whate'er you wish, whate'er you prize,
'This wond'rous mirror will display;
'A thought shall bring it to your eyes,
'Conspicuous in that magic ray.

'With Ellen soon your suit will speed,
'And soon the flame will cease to glow;
'With other nymphs you'll then succeed,
'Till fate a wealthy bride bestow.

'But for the various joys assign'd,
'Titania claims your eldest boy;
'For still a page of human kind
'Successive fills the proud employ.

'Nor will the magic glass display
'Whatever form you wish to see,
'Nor aid you, till you wash away
'The stains of dull mortality.'

'And see, the fairy pool is nigh,
'Where every day my limbs I lave;
'When Phœbus climbs the morning sky,
'And gains new vigour from the wave.

'But when you plunge into the flood
'And seek with me the further shore,
'A flower, upon the verdant sod,
'Your eyes shall view, unseen before.

'By gifted eyes 'tis only seen,
'By hands profane 'tis never found;
'Those elves that trip the moon-light green
'Have clos'd it in a magic bound.

'You'll know it by its golden bell
'And little moon that seems to wane,
'And wax within its silken cell
'Like Cynthia in her blue domain.

'And there a drop of chrystal dew
'Shall sit upon its sunny breast,
'This wondrous orb which now you view
'Shall in that circle lie comprest.

'This drop of dew, at your command,
'Shall soon assume its former size,
'Then take it boldly in your hand,
'The fairy queen assigns the prize.

'And whatsoe'er you wish to view,
'Shall in the magic glass be shown;
'Then boldly your design pursue,
'And conquest soon your wish shall crown.

'But you must crop the golden flow'r,
'And fling it in the fairy pool;
A pledge, that in the destin'd hour,
'Your son shall join our Elfin school.

'I shall be in the fairy pool
'To bear the welcome pledge away;
'For this is her unalter'd rule,
'Whose nod the moony tribes obey.

'The golden pledge she must obtain,
'Before her promise be fulfill'd;
'Then she will send the pledge again,
'Whene'er she claims the favour'd child.'

'O grant to me the pledge of love,
'O grant the glorious boon,' he cry'd,
'The destin'd hour my faith will prove,
'Let weal or woe my race betide.

'O grant to me the glorious boon,
'Not only will I swim the stream,
'But 'mongst the minions of the moon
'My son shall dance to Luna's beam.'*

* The design of this is to show how the human character is degraded by an employment of the arts of seduction, not to mention the tragic fates of so many deluded female victims, an hardness of heart is induced, which destroys every spark of regard for their unfortunate offspring.

'Then fling your vestments all away,
'And plunge amid the waves with me;
'Soon shall your wond'ring eyes survey
'The flower that grows on yonder lee.'

The fairy flung his weeds away,
And on the steepy border stood;
While dim beneath the orb of day
Unusual darkness ting'd the flood.

It was no cloud, by vapours bred,
That o'er the limpid waters hung;
But that dark gloom that over head
Still floated as he mov'd along.

And now he plung'd beneath the flood,
And deeper now the darkness fell,
The vent'rous youth admiring stood
To see the waters round him swell.

And now he sought the further shore,
And left a signal on the green;
Then, plunging in the waves once more,
He div'd, and was no longer seen.

The gloom, that o'er the waters hung,
Made them appear both dark and deep,
The vent'rous youth amid them sprung,
Like eagle from an airy steep.

But Fate in deadly ambuscade
Lay hid beneath the murky pall ;
The ford contain'd beneath its shade
A pointed rock that met his fall.

Ah, where is now the moony flower
That on the border seem'd to grow ?
And where is now that Elfin bower
That bid your short-liv'd ardour glow ?

Where is that wond'rous mirror flown,
And fairy man that swam before ?
He laughs to hear thy dying groan,
And see the waters ting'd with gore.

THE RECOGNITION.

Founded on an incident at Wexford, in the late rebellion in Ireland (1798.) The person meant by Albert is the Rev. John Elgee, Rector of Wexford.

THE

RECOGNITION,

A TALE.

'O, Father! why those bells so loud?
'Is this a day that calls to prayer?
'What means the mixt tumultuous crowd
'That run confus'dly here and there?

'From this high window I can spy
'That some are sad, and some are gay;
'Some lift their frighted eyes on high,
'And some a savage joy display.

'What mean these female clamours shrill,
'Echo'd by distant shouts afar?
'And hark! yon drums the concert fill,
'And trumpets blow the blast of war.

'Alas! it is no blast of war,
'For Britain's red cross waves no more;
'Alas! I see her radiant star
'Deep setting in a sea of gore.

'Look up! my children, look on high,
'Our only succour there we find;
'Behold yon clouds, that sweep the sky,
'Before the welcome western wind.

'But haste we hence our speedy flight,
'While rage and fear alternate sway,
'Before the hostile bands unite,
'And our brave soldiers fall a prey.

'The breezes blow, the welcome prow
'Awaits us in the harbour near;
'The price is paid, the compact made,
'O haste—for there's no safety here.

'O thou, whose mighty arm did save
'Thy servants from a general doom;
'When heaven in awful judgment gave
'All earthly things a wat'ry tomb.

'Not all are guilty Lord—not all
'Have cast religion's yoke away;
'O check thy judgments ere they fall,
'And make the sentenc'd isle their prey.

'I ask not for myself alone,
'In life and death in thee I trust;
'But who thy holy cause shall own,
'When thy pure temples sink to dust?

'My babes, my spouse—oh, gracious Power!
'In them thy mercy signalize;
'Let them for ever bless the hour
'They sought protection from the skies.'

With hope, that seem'd to speed their way
Thro' hostile streets, a faithful guide
Attending, to the welcome bay
They came and climb'd the vessel's side.

Expectant of the coming tide,
At Slaney's mouth the vessel lay,
Prepar'd across the bar to ride,
And thence pursue its wat'ry way.

Soft roll'd the tide, the summer's sky
O'er land and ocean smil'd serene;
Nought louring—but the pilot's eye,
In all the prospect round was seen.

And oft the distant walls he eyed,
And oft the clouds that swept the sky;
He seem'd, as longing for the tide,
From that detested shore to fly.

Still seem'd he of unblemish'd faith,
And those who now in danger sought
His aid, to fly pursuing death,
By favours old the boon had bought.

But now—ah! how affliction's hand
Divides the chaff and golden grain,
A treble price with stern demand
He claim'd, to waft them o'er the main.

Not treble price their life to save
Was scrupled by the flying band;
No trader, but an abject slave
He seem'd to Mammon's stern command.

And now the fast returning wave
Seem'd to extend the swelling bay,
And speedy hope the zephyrs gave
To waft them o'er the watry way.

'For Milford, ho! For Milford, ho!'
Aloft the jolly sailors cry,
Then every heart began to glow,
And transport beam'd in every eye.

And now the anchors all were weigh'd,
And now the spreading sails were bent;
'Why is the needful task delay'd,
'And why the precious moments spent.'

'Why westward turns the pilot's eye?
'Does he suspect the veering gale,
'Or sees a signal in the sky
'That tells the zephyr soon may fail?

'Yet should the zephyrs sink to rest,
'Were we becalm'd on yonder sea,
'Far from the slaughters of the west,
'We then might wait from sorrow free.'

In short debate the hapless train
Had stood, for now a sight appear'd
Which froze the blood in ev'ry vein,
And ev'ry doubt with horror clear'd.

Afar, the sable flag of death
On Wexford's spiry summit hung,
And round the crowded square beneath
Loud peals of exultation rung.

THE

RECOGNITION.

PART II.

Yet steady as the circling star,
That seems to eye the northern pole,
The pilot view'd the scene afar—
His looks betray'd his secret soul.

And still observant of his eye,
Prepar'd to spread the flowing sail,
The shipmen stood ; while o'er the sky
Unvarying blew the western gale.

Again the passengers exclaim'd,
'Why linger till the tide's at height?
'Our foes may send, by rage enflam'd,
'Their boats to intercept our flight.

'Why is the canvass half unspread?'—
Gloomy and dull the master heard,
Then bade the servants heave the lead,
And to the fatal haven steer'd.

Complaints, remonstrance, threats, and prayer,
On his fell mind were spent in vain,
No tyger views with sterner glare
His prostrate victim on the plain.

Force they prepar'd, but force was vain,
For shoreward now the bugle blew,
And many a pinnace o'er the main
Was seen to waft the hostile crew.

Oh better it had been to face
The hostile crew, and die at sea,
Than seiz'd by that remorseless race,
To yield a bloodless victory.

But Rapine's unrelenting laws,
Had reft them of their arms before,
No time was o'er their fate to pause,
The fatal vessel sought the shore.

Oh how they envied then the train
Whose vessel plough'd the Celtic wave,
And founder'd in the whelming main,
When Rossignol* the signal gave.

How envied they the dusky band,
To slavery borne from Gambia's shore,
Where hope and fear, with even hand,
A changeful prospect spreads before.

* Rossignol, who ordered the transport ships, where the prisoners were confined, to be sunk in the river Vilaire.

Not with such acclamations rung
That strand where Duncan's glorious name
Was heard to peal from every tongue,
Responsive to Britannia's fame.

Yet Albert's was an honour'd name,
A friend was he to human kind,
And tho' he shar'd no martial fame,
Yet fate no vulgar boon assign'd.

And still when stern Calamity
Her terrors o'er the crowd display'd,
The patron of the poor was he,
Nor ineffectual was his aid.

At sight of him, amid the band,
As near the woful pageant drew,
In anguish some forsook the strand,
And sadly look'd a last adieu.

'Twas all they durst, 'twas all they could.
And now the mournful pomp appear'd,
And right and left the savage crowd
A passage for their captives clear'd.

Now the devoted band forlorn,
Take on the beach a last farewel,
Each to a different prison borne,
Midst many a loud barbarian yell.

But in deep silence from the shore
A chosen guard sad Albert led
Back to his hospitable door,
From whence with better hopes he fled.

Oh then the loud Barbarian yell
Had been some respite to his pain;
For keen the shaft of sorrow fell,
On his swoln heart and dizzy brain.

In barren smiles the cheerless day
Was seen receding from the view,
On Slaney's banks the twilight grey,
O'er the dread scene her vesture drew.

Yet not with calm and soothing charm,
As late on Slaney's banks she past,
But horror, now, and wild alarm,
Behind, her dewy footsteps chas'd.

A murth'rous mask she seem'd to wear;
The dagger lurk'd beneath her pall;
Like Gorgon's seem'd her raven hair,
Issuing from Pluto's gloomy hall.

Still as the red flame rose around,
Her dreadful lineaments were seen,
And still more horribly she frown'd
Each fitful gleam of light between.

Yet peaceful was the scene on high,
Tho' horror spread o'er all below,
And the mild splendour of the sky,
With glory crown'd the dreadful show.

And oft the last convulsive shriek,
And oft the cry of wild despair,
With terror ting'd each pallid cheek,
Loud pealing thro' the midnight air.

As Albert from his window gaz'd
On those bright orbs that roll'd above,
Gradual he found his fancy rais'd
To those blest seats of life and love.

'Ye loud sublunar tempests blow,
'Above your rage my spirit soars,
'Unshackled, in this den of woe,
'And nobler seats above explores.

'More steadfast than the polar light,
'Bright centre of the circling fires,
'Is he whose hand directs my flight,
'Is he who wings my strong desires.

'My spouse—my children—cease to weep,
'And think how far our lot excels
'Those minds whom vice has lull'd asleep,
'In pleasure's bands, by magic spells.

'What are the horrors of this room,
'With rage without, and fear within,
'To that deep, intellectual gloom,
'Where sits enthrall'd the slave of sin?

'Hark to yon agonising cry!—
'O look not thus so deadly pale,
'Perhaps some martyr mounts the sky,
'Redeem'd from sorrow's noisome vale.

'And you, my children, you shall scape
'From dark Temptation's deadly train,
'From each alluring, dreadful shape,
'That leads to vice, or threatens pain.

'To vice, to worldly cares no more,
'To low pursuits no more a slave,
'How blest to leave this stormy shore,
'And live to joys beyond the grave.

'Now ruffian Murther seems to sleep,
'And Anguish, and exhausted Rage
'A direful sabbath seem to keep,
'Reposing on the bloody stage.

'Ah, would to heaven some gentle power
'Would soothe your woes awhile in sleep,
'And show in dreams the blissful bower
'That now our martyr'd brethren keep.'

Nor were the father's prayers unheard,
For gentle Sleep, with placid hand,
Wav'd over all the weary train,
In Lethe dipp'd his charmful wand.

O then the scene was shifted soon,
And glorious visions sooth'd their rest,
While justice, in the pallid noon
Of night, the murtherer's soul opprest.

For then the dream-dispensing power
Found all th' ideal world her own;
The guilty feel the torturing hour,
The victim wears a fadeless crown.

THE

RECOGNITION.

PART III.

'WHY was I call'd thro' boundless space,
'Thro' peopled worlds and orbs of flame,
'To see the deathless soul's disgrace,
'In the foul den of guilt and shame?

'Twice was the sovereign mandate given,
'And twice I wing'd my uncouth way;
'First lighting where no lamp of heaven
'Yet e'er dispell'd a welcome ray.

'O there—what awful scenes I spy'd,
'The mental pang, the fiery pest,
'That swelling like th' alternate tide,
'By turns annoy'd the tortur'd breast!

'What call'd me from the blest domain,
'Where heavenly love and pity sway,
'To shudder here in needless pain,
'And linger thus in dubious day?

'What is my office, what the task
'To me by heaven's command assign'd?
'Must I put on the human mask,
'And clothe in dust the active mind?

'O how I long that mask to wear,
'If thus I might their woes assuage,
'That man from man is doom'd to bear,
'When anguish feels the hand of rage.

'Now am I forc'd, with double pain,
'A naked entity to roam,
'And see the furies' yelling train,
'That urge the wretches to their doom.

'It must be so—the furious gust
'Of passion must its work fulfil,
'Till mankind learn (as late they must)
'The lessons that subdue the will.

'For sad experience late affords
'That only remedy below
'To vice, that scorns the sage's words,
'But wisdom learns, subdu'd by woe.

'And I must watch the demon's spell,
'Commingling with the vital breeze,
'Till raging rancour, born in hell,
'Each breast with dire possession seize.

'And I must hear the holy name
'Abus'd, to sanction deeds of blood,
'And reeking steel, and mounting flame,
'Revenge the old engender'd feud.'

A spirit thus was heard to sing,
Quick fancy caught the mournful strain,
As borne aloft on viewless wing,
He hover'd o'er the savage train.

'You too an human form shall wear,'
A voice unown'd was heard to say,
Sudden a whirlwind seem'd to bear
A shape, that vanish'd soon away.

It seem'd to wave a shadowy spear;
A snowy crest, and garb of green
The sailing shape was seen to wear,
Flitting across the changeful scene.

'And you that face again shall view,
'That in the dungeon erst you spy'd,
'Watch for the sable flag anew,
'And mark the turning of the tide.'

'Twas morn, the gentle vision past,
With tardy and reluctant flight,
The haggard victims woke aghast,
And met the dreaded beam of light.

'Awake my spouse, my children rise,
'An angel waits for you and me,
'See! dawning in you orient skies,
'The day-spring of eternity.'

Yet all was still and calm below,
No hostile sound was heard afar;
While Albert sate, with solemn brow,
Watching the sun's ascending car.

At length the bells began to toll;
The sable streamer in the wind,
A signal wav'd to many a soul,
To leave the load of life behind.

Soon from the busy hall beneath,
O'er which their pain'd attention hung,
Came sounds—the harbingers of death,
And round their sire the children hung.

Anon, an heavy trampling sound
Of feet, ascending fast they hear;
And striking on the rails around,
The rude clash of no single spear.

The door gave way, their captive prey
The cruel savages surround;
The faithful spouse above dismay,
Yet springs before the lifted wound.

'O spare his life, let mine suffice,
'For them, for him I'll freely bleed:
'Whom has he wrong'd?' her frantic cries
No more than rocks and seas they heed.

Yet frantic in her grief, around,
Her sentenc'd lord the matron hung;
Now savage cries her clamours drown'd,
With grief and rage the chamber rung.

'Go force her from her hold,' aloud,
The master of the felons cry'd,
'Go, drag her from the scene of blood,
'Her doom we'll afterwards decide.'

'Retire my love,' the husband said,
'Let not my death your eyes profane;
'Think who the bloody ransom paid;
'We only part to meet again.'

With agonizing look they part,
And now they lay his bosom bare;
The ruffian, nam'd to pierce his heart
Surveys him with infernal glare.

They hold his arms, his head behind,
Seiz'd by the locks they backward drew,
Nor yet the bloody steel declin'd,
Tho' wing'd by death the moments flew.

But in this solemn pause of death,
Alarming sounds their hearts appal,
Which thunder'd on the yielding gate,
And clamour'd in the peopled hall.

THE

RECOGNITION.

PART IV.

O wand'ring Muse the respite seize,
The soul astounding cause to tell ;
Did suppliant prayers the chief appease,
Or mercy stop the funeral bell ?

No mercy stopp'd the funeral bell,
Still wav'd the sable ensign high ;
No dewdrops of repentance fell,
From cruel Bigot's wolvish eye.

A chieftain with his roving band
From Bargey's neighb'ring mountain came ;
Seen by the sun, that o'er the strand
Arose, their javelins seem'd to flame.

The mountaineers upon their spears,
After their long march stood to rest,
When lo ! a light foot youth appears
With snowy plume and verdant vest.*

* The uniform of the Rebels

The sash around his shoulders flung
  Was brighter than the blush of morn,
And by his side a sabre hung,
  And in his hand a bugle horn.

'Stand to your arms,' aloud he cried,
  'And haste, you chieftain, haste away;
'Your deadliest foe the friendly tide
  'Has wafted back, a welcome prey.

'And now with proffer'd gold he tries
  'To bribe his guards and 'scape again;
'O hasten, or you lose your prize,
  'And hopes of vengeance are all vain.'

'Lead you the way,' the chieftain cry'd,
  'And woe to him that lags behind.'
Soon, with new energy supplied,
  The rest pursue with feet of wind.

And now the destin'd street they gain,
  The fleet conductor sped before,
Still beck'ning on the hasty train,
  And pointing to the fatal door.

And on they rush, with stormy noise,
  And up the stairs like thunder go,
Just as the master felon's voice
  Gave orders for the deadly blow.

'Desist,' the stranger cry'd, 'to me
'Alone the captive's blood is due;
'Let go his hair—look up, and see
'A face you never thought to view.'

The crowd, amaz'd, upon him gaz'd—
Now fury check'd the leader's tongue;
His pallid face the victim rais'd—
No more the bloodhounds on him hung.

'O all ye saints of heav'n! 'tis he—
'Tis he himself! O friend forgive!
'I pay but half I owe to thee;
'To thee I owe that now I live.

'Spent with disease, in prison laid,*
'Thy pitying hand, thy fostering care,
'Preserv'd me from the double shade
'Of ling'ring want and black despair.

'Tis now my turn to ward thy doom,
'And thy compassion's price to pay.'
Loud murmurs ran around the room,
And brandish'd spears provok'd the fray.

* See page 197, l. 18, where this is alluded to. The author hopes he will be pardoned for introducing this little episode of the guardian spirit's first visiting the captive in the dungeon, and then making use of the gratitude of that captive to save the valuable life of one, to whose good offices he had been indebted. The Recognition actually took place as described: the author was favoured with an account of it from Mr. Elgee, a few Months after the event, who also told him the circumstances represented above. The *Machinery* of a superior agent is only designed to illustrate, in a very inadequate manner this signal interposition of Providence.

'Stand to your arms, my friends—come on;
'By heavens, the man that lifts a spear
'Shall for the deed with life atone,
'And buy his headlong rashness dear.

'Give way, ourselves will guard his life,
'And for the precious charge engage.'
The murth'rers shunn'd th' unequal strife,
And leave the room with stifled rage.

THE FAIRY FAVOUR.

THE FAIRY FAVOUR.

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

COUNTESS OF MOIRA AND HASTINGS, &c.

On her Birth-day, April 10, 1794,

When the Forces designed for the Expedition to Britanny were encamped in the Isle of Wight, under

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF MOIRA.

FAIR is the form that gently waves
Her flow'ry scarf on yonder steep,
Where the bold shore of Vecta braves
The rolling of the restless deep.

For yonder chief she means the prize,
Who, on his blazon'd shield reclin'd,
Observes the promise of the skies,
And marks the motions of the wind.

And oft he views the distant Sail,
With tidings fraught from Cancalles bay,
Or watches Cynthia's sable veil
Slow moving from her face away.

'*So may the darkness disappear*,
'*O'er you unhappy kingdom hung*.'
The Fairy heard the pious prayer,
And o'er his breast her FAVOUR flung.

That fairy favour ne'er was meant,
Except for some distinguish'd breast;
To worth superior ever sent,
It floats along the stainless vest.

Such the beloved Titus wore,
And such to Antonine was giv'n,
And such, on Jordan's hallow'd shore,
On Godfrey dropp'd the gift of heav'n.

'Twas sent to Caledonia's lord *,
(Of Hastings' noble stem was he);
Who Scotia's injur'd rights restor'd,
And bade her manly sons be free.

Meanness, nor perfidy, nor pride,
Shall ne'er the glorious boon profane;
Tho' in a regal car they ride,
With shouting millions in their train.

The Muses and the Graces wove
The fairy scarf on Eirin's strand;
And heav'n-taught Hope, and kindred Love,
And spotless Honour lent a hand.

The present, by a mother made,
Was sent upon her natal day;
O may that laurel never fade
That runs around its border gay.

* Robert Bruce. See the English and Scottish Peerages

And may that red cross, oft of old
By her immortal sires renown'd,
Its sanguine glories still unfold,
And England's haughty foes confound.

Thy vital powers and virtues, both,
O Hastings! from that source you drew;
Her precepts nurs'd the noble growth,
And bath'd the plant with heavenly dew.

Quick glancing o'er the face of night,
The Genii of thy line are seen,
And round the sea-beat margin light,
Encamping on the wavy green.

They see the giant spectre* stalk
Across the flood, from isle to isle;
Soon may they cross his shadowy walk,
And strip him of his plunder'd spoil.

Bold Thibaut† hears the hostile charge
Blown o'er the trembling surge afar,
His trumpets sound from Vecta's verge,
For glory, vengeance, and Navarre.

* Anarchy.

† Thibaut, King of Navarre, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. He was the common ancestor of the families of Bourbon and Hastings.

A MONODY

ON

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH HENRY,

LATE OF STRAFFAN, ESQ.

County Kildare, Ireland. November, 1796.

Would no presage my coming anguish tell?
And did you stand upon the verge of time,
When late, with manly cheer, and look sublime,
You gently prest my hand, and said "Farewell?"
Fresh from thy social board I weep thy fall,
And weep the more, for here I mourn alone.*
Yet that heart-rending sight, thy sable pall
I scap'd, nor did I hear the general groan!—
Yet why ignobly weep thy glorious change,
Ah, Henry! tho' to me for ever lost
Thy friendship, while this nether world I range,
Shall be my consolation and my boast!
While with their levied bands the rural Thanes†
Their ruffling ensigns to the winds display,
While martial clangours rouse th' embattled swains,
And emptied hamlets swell the proud array,
Another clarion calls him to the field.
In other climes he leads a brighter train,
Who, saved by him from penury and pain,
Blazon his noble deeds, on earth conceal'd.

* The author heard the news of Mr. H.'s death in the country.

† The yeomen of Ireland were about this time embodied.

Long, long before the stern behest
Of dire Bellona call'd afar
Ierne's gallant sons to vest
Their hardy limbs in weeds of war.
Long ere her Thanes, compell'd to try
The force of loyalty and love,
Bound in a sacramental tie,
The tenants of the field and grove;
The seeds of loyalty and love
By him, with copious hand were sown;
Th' indissoluble net he wove,
That made the charmed soul his own.
Where'er his influence reach'd around,
Where'er the champaign felt his sway,
Sedition fled the hallow'd ground,
Or join'd the jocund roundelay.

But now the jocund roundelay is past,
What doleful dirge the drooping Naiads sing,
Stern winter comes to rule the lonely waste;
Low lies the hand that smooth'd his rugged wing.
Ye fevers!* brood along the blasted heath,
Palsies and rheums infect the lurid sky;
Ye demons of the fens, with doleful cry
Sing the sad triumphs of disease and death,
For he is gone whose holy magic drew
The spirits of the mine, and pregnant dell,
To bid the pulse with buoyant vigour swell,
And all the vital energies renew.

* Besides Mr. H.'s general beneficence to every object of distress in his neighbourhood, he dedicated an annual sum of money to purchase medicine and advice for the sick poor on his estates.

Where culminating suns, with downward ray,
Awake the aromatic world below,
His wealth, to charm disease, and lighten woe,
Procur'd the genial produce of the day,
And yet, by more than noxious glooms,
Or baleful damps opprest,
Genius, that flower that seldom blooms
In this unhealthy waste,
He foster'd still with kindly dews,
And ever lov'd to tend,
To every science, every Muse,
A firm and constant friend.

But the dim bounds of this sublunar globe
Were far too scanty for his eagle mind,
Where Newton* soar'd, he caught his flying robe,
And left this dusky planet far behind.
The burning orbs he scann'd, the deeps beneath,
And soon before his intellectual ray
The clouds flew diverse, as Aurora's breath
Rolls the dark vapours from the porch of day.
Yet more he lov'd to chase the glooms away
That hung oppressive o'er the drooping mind,
Than all the wonders of the milky way,
Tho' to his intellectual ken resign'd.
—But far above the milky way,
If ever spirit upward flew,
The saint, enthron'd in cloudless day,
Enjoys th' illimitable view.

* Mr. H. was highly distinguished by uncommon attainments in the abstruser sciences, particularly mathematics and astronomy. His general learning, and taste for the Classics, both ancient and modern, were no less conspicuous.

Moira ! on thee he bends his eye,
His rival in the godlike race,
And marks the chorus of the sky.
Late may'st thou hear them sing thy praise.
Thence on that kindred mind* descends the beam,
Whose early dawn is dimm'd by rising woe;
Yet, gentle youth, let thy full sorrows stream;
Beneath that genial shower the Virtues grow.
The bright impression of departed worth
Will deeper sink by sympathetic aid,
Thy pious grief will aid the glorious birth,
And plant Elysium in the cypress shade.
An arduous path before thy footsteps lies,
A great example calls thee to aspire ;
O may thy bosom feel the rich supplies
Of generous sympathy and native fire ;
Still may some inspiring lay
Cheer thee along the steep ascending way ;
And with a solemn breathing spell,
Bid thy full heart with emulation swell.

Mark'd you not the tears that flow
Down the sallow cheek of Woe ?
Or, on Liffey's hazle brink,
Where Gratitude will sit and think,
Heard you not those rising sighs,
Gently stealing on the skies ?
Deem then not *lost*, because they float
Adown the stream with Sorrow's dying note.

* His son, the present Mr. Henry, of Straffan.

Ah, no! for to the purged ear
Far, far they mount above the stellar sphere,
And join the deep immortal strain,
Sung in loud chorus by th' angelic train.
Like breezes soft that swell the gale,
Whose sounding pinions sweep the bosom'd vale.
'Tis thus the lowly whisp'ring airs that breath
  Around the solemn ailes and awful choirs,
Or in the monumental gloom beneath,
  Scarce stir the ashes of our slumb'ring sires.
  Soon as the loud Æolian breath inspires
The sacred tubes, and bids the anthem rise;
  While heaven accordant hears, and earth admires,
Gradual their lowly origin despise,
The diapason join, and mingle with the skies.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES WILLIAM

LORD VISCOUNT CHARLEVILLE.

On the Acquisition of his first Title of

BARON TULLAMORE, 1797.

Oft, where the sylvan shades unite
To intercept the golden ray,
And shed abroad a softer day,
(O'er the winding vale reposing,
Each deep recess in solemn light disclosing)
Or where, through rising stages green
Of oak and elm, by glimpses seen,
Peeps the bosom'd hill supine,
There struck with deep religious awe,
With Fancy's eye, the Flamen saw
Some God descend, and mark the *place*
For ardent prayer and lofty praise.
Or, where the giant hand of Time
Scoop'd the cloud-capp'd hill sublime,
And left in air, suspended high,
The frowning arch to meet the sky.
While from their subterranean hall
The slumb'ring waters hear his call,
And hurry through the pendent gloom,
And fill the cave and pass the dome;
While the Naiads hear with wonder
Their own reverberated thunder:

There Fancy mus'd, and there *Devotion* burn'd,
Long ere the hand of Art the figur'd pile adorn'd.

Thus, before the regal hand
The bright, ennobling boon bestow'd,
Glad Fame from her aerial stand
Afar the generous claimant show'd.
The PATENT was enroll'd above,
By all the social virtues sign'd,
And Gratitude and Friendship strove
Who first the well-earn'd wreath should bind:
Among the guardians of thy native plain,
Whose banded legions keep the foe at bay,
None holds in firmer bonds the martial train,
By strong affection's sympathetic sway.
Sweet is the charm of innate worth,
When some superior soul
Like Phœbus, issuing from his vernal goal,
Invites the mental blossoms forth,
And, warbling through the deep responsive grove,
Resounds the general song of harmony and love.
Nor yet suffic'd that envy'd lot,
But partial heaven the Muse bestow'd;
Thy youthful feet, by Spenser taught,
The flow'ry paths of Fancy trode.
Fancy, that lifts the favour'd soul sublime,
O'er the Circaen fumes that flit below,
And bids the pure abstracted spirit know,
The holy raptures of a nobler clime.
Blest amulet! that keeps the buoyant mind
From dull and sensual dregs, and sordid cares refin'd.

On Gaul's devoted shore,
Stern Nemesis, relentless queen,
Hovering o'er the troubled scene,
With iron fingers tore
The rich patrician wreath from many a forfeit head,
And shouting scorn the haggard victims led
To count their wand'ring by the changing moon,
And beg in lands remote the niggard boon;
While anarchy, like a returning flood,
O'erlooks our menac'd coast.
Yet, while Virtue keeps her post,
While honours, not at random given,
Seem the sacred stamp of heaven,
Descending on the great and good;
Whilst, like the cloud-compelling sign,*
The bright reflected virtues shine,
It speaks the power that bids the furious wave
Know its primæval bounds, and at due distance rave.
For all the floating pomp of war,
And England's flag, commanding far
Her dreadful navy's thund'ring chase,†
Flashing thick in Neptune's face;
Pale Batavia's scatter'd flight,
Through the deep sulphureous night,
And tow'ring fort, and boomy chain,
And all Bellona's martial train,
Are but the outguards of the state,
Inferior ministers of fate.

* The rainbow.

† Written after the victory by Admiral Duncan.

Useless, as those idle toys,
Which the infant's sport destroys ;
Till VIRTUE gives the great machine,
The master movements far within ;
And Thanes and statesmen learn that mild control,
Thy fine transcendent art that charms the willing soul.

IMITATION OF HORACE,

Lib. 1, Ode 15.

Pastor cum tratreret per freta ravibus, &c.

WRITTEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1798.

DURING THE REBELLION OF IRELAND.

Scene, *The Hill of Howth, near Dublin Bay.*

Waiting for the moony tide,
O'er the sounding bar to ride,
Anchor'd on the rolling flood,
Fraught with fate the vessel stood.
Never by Arzilis steering,
Wafted plagues from Pontus bearing,
Spread a more terrific sail,
On the widely tainted gale.
There, beneath the midnight moon,
Musing to the zephyr's tune,
Through the whistling shrowds aloft,
Piping shrill, or sighing soft,
Marius stood, revolving long
Topics to inflame the throng;
And many an airy scheme to free
The friends of Celtic liberty,
Now in gloomy durance pent,
Or wearying heaven with piteous plaint.
When steering from the harbour's inmost brim,
Where the wan cliffs the Lunar beam return,
A shadowy barge afar was seen to skim
Onward, uncanvass'd, o'er the billows borne.

But like an hovering cloud, that blots the morn,
A sable ensign seem'd the keel to guide:
Such sounds as warble round the funeral urn,
With dying cadence fill'd the breezy void,
The deep Milesian DIRGE at every pause reply'd,
And many a white scarf floated on the wind,
Wav'd by aerial hands around a bier:
Where rosemarine and baleful yew entwin'd,
Adorn'd the corse, bedew'd with many a tear,
The pageant now was seen, distinct and near,
And standing on the prow, with visage spare,
Oft turning on the stars a look severe,
As if she menac'd heaven, in wild despair
An elvish matron stood, and bann'd the name of CLARE
"Turn, oh turn," she cry'd, "again
Measure back the wavy main;
You, that on the rolling deck
Seem to mourn our recent wreck!
See our schemes of many a moon,
In a moment all undone!
Though the casket of the cause,
(Pandora's gift, that braves the laws)
To no unskilful hands was given,
By th' antagonist of heaven;
Whether now you stay or fly,
Yet the keen, uncheated eye
Of CLARE, will mark your motions still,
And watch the workings of your will.
When to cozen careless eyes,
Clad in Freedom's fair disguise,

All beneath the conscious moon
With a soft hyæna tune,
Where compassion seem'd to melt,
Till many a breast the measure felt:
Late our favour'd friends began
To lead astray the martial clan;
Arm'd with Truth's victorious spell,
He trac'd the felon to his cell;
He made the Magian fling away
His mask, and shew in open day
His Gorgon look and genuine hue,
All profan'd by public view.
Though you strove with all your might,
To wash the sons of Hades white;
Though your slaves, with pious pain,
Strove his hated name to stain
Public love the balance turns,
Freedom smiles, and Slander mourns.—
—Turn again, and cross the deep,
Heavenly justice will not sleep.
—Heard you not the battle's roar,
Echoing round Menapia's* shore?---
—Revenge, revenge for gentle Slane,†
Running purple to the main,
There the demon, woke by you,
Smiles upon the sentenc'd crew.
Reverend age and beauty blooming
In the cruel blaze consuming.

* Menapia, ancient name of the counties Wexford and Waterford
† River of Wexford.

There he strides the winding flood !
See his javelin drunk with blood !
There many a corse, baptiz'd in gore,
Welters to the fatal shore.
See yon hill, that looks sublime
O'er the desolated clime :
See its summit wrapt in smoke !
See its cliffs by thunder shook !
While on its sides the lightnings play,
Flashing intolerable day.
There the dying and the dead
In mingled hecatombs are spread :
Thence the baleful anthems rise,
Grateful to the nether skies,
While hovering nigh, in Stygian gloom
Horror spreads her dragon plume,
And sees the long procession go
Wailing to the shades below.
Hasting thence, the routed clan
Rally on the mountain's van ;
Or, by loyal rage pursu'd,
Battle in the sounding wood !
—Thy work is done, thy task is o'er,
Hasten to some distant shore ;
But vengeance shall o'ertake your deeds,
For not in vain Ierne bleeds.'

A MONODY

ON

THE DEATH OF THE LATE

MOST NOBLE

THE MARQUIS OF DOWNSHIRE,

SEPTEMBER 7, 1801.

The dog-star sunk, and with it drew*
To Hope's deluded eye, away
Pandora's imps, a hideous crew,
That gorg'd the grave with hourly prey.
The far-destroying angel seem'd
To follow the terrific star,
We thought his fiery falchion gleam'd
Its last, in Ocean's waves afar:
Autumn, in Hymeneal robe
Of richest green and gold array'd,
To the bright orb that warms the globe,
Her smiling progeny display'd,
'Twas then, conceal'd behind the festive pall,
The dark assassin took his secret stand—
Would no kind angel lift a saving hand
When the grim shadow crost the good man's hall?
Alas! the fatal dart
Already reach'd his noble heart,
Before Affection's fervent prayer
Could pierce th' incumbent air,
Or Pæon's hand employ his usual art.

* The mortality of that season was, in the north of Ireland, seldom equalled at any period in the memory of man.

Mild are the glories of September's moon,
And rich the presents which her reign conveys;
But she has robb'd us of an heaven-sent boon,
That all her waving wealth but ill repays:
Poor are the floating fields of golden grain,
To such a MIND, that when her cheerless beam
Malignant glanc'd upon the niggard plain,
Open'd sweet Mercy's heaven-directed stream.

On *Tamaris' aerial brow
I stood to view the scene below;
When o'er the yellow fields advancing,
The swains pursu'd their welcome toil,
In bending files, with sickles glancing,
And of its vesture stripp'd the soil.
But oft they stood in solemn pause,
With fear and pity struck, to view
Some friend by Fate's relentless laws
Borne to the grave with dirges due;
While, from the winding vale in cadence slow,
Complaining Echo sent the notes of woe.
Here startled Fancy saw, in wide survey
A picture of the JUDGMENT DAY.
To the harvesters of heaven
Their office seem'd already given;
And viewless squadrons of the sky
Seem'd around their tasks to ply.

* The western extremity of the mountains of Mourne, whence the view extends into seven counties.

O'er ridgy hill and russet mead
The swathes and sheaves alternate fell;
And ever and anon was heard
The deep-ton'd funeral bell,
As DEATH had meant in active speed
His rustic rivals to excell;
And many a busy hand appear'd
To cull the tares, a task severe,
And to their final doom to bear—
Ye thoughtless men! prepare to meet your God,
And learn to deprecate the lifted rod!

Not such wert THOU, although a sudden fate,
Lamented HILL! consign'd thee to the dust;
No—to thy large benevolence, we trust
Heaven opes the riches of th' empyreal state.
The social virtues all were thine,
And ONE that rose to heights divine,
*_The man that injur'd you forgave_,
You pitied sin's entangled slave,
And lur'd him from the fatal snare,
With holy and paternal care;
Till, by your great example taught,
His heart the glow of virtue caught;

* The fact here alluded to distinguished the last year of the Marquiss's life. Though the affair was made public, yet some considerations prevent a further detail in this place: it is only mentioned here for the purpose of throwing a new light on the truly amiable character of the late Marquis. As it affords a singular instance of vice and error, reformed by the paternal attention of a *man* in an exalted station of life, it is hoped that the important lesson conveyed by this fact, will plead the author's excuse for mentioning it here.

And not (we hope) a transient heat,
Soon from the torpid breast to fleet.
This might seem flattery, while you liv'd to tell,
But flattery now is o'er;
Hark! to the music of yon mournful bell,
Yon solemn vault has shut the door
On adulation! ye! attend the call,
Whom heaven like HIM affords the means to bless,
Pining worth or sore distress:
A dread eye views this air-invested ball;
A giant arm uplifts the cloudy pall,
That shows the realms of woe, or everlasting peace.

Accept this votive song, lamented shade!
(From one, that only with the *eye* of MIND
Beheld you, ere you left the world behind)
Among thy reliques laid.
Yet oft thy virtues, in the grateful mien,
And sparkling eye, by sorrow dimm'd before,
In multiplied reflection have I seen;
As when at early day
The rising sun looks o'er
September's cold and paly dews,
Some swelling bank returns the ray,
In all the rich and splendid hues
That Iris gives the raptur'd sight,
When on the vernal shower her streaming glories light.
Soon these transient colours fade,
Wasted in the desert air;
Not so thy deeds, by many a prayer
Up you azure vault convey'd.

Borne on no fickle gale, they found their way
Where heaven's recording saints their deathless rolls display.

September's paly dews.] This pleasing effect is often observed in a fine autumnal morning, when the sun is about twenty degrees high, and the spectator walks between it and an opposite dewy bank, or gently rising ground. While his eye is directed to that object, the colours of the rainbow seem to move along the bank, and accompany his steps.

TO THE MOST NOBLE

THE

MARCHIONESS OF DOWNSHIRE,

On receiving from her Ladyship Engravings of the late Marquis and his two eldest Sons, with a Silver Standish.

Accept this mean return from one who felt
His country's sorrow, when she lost her friend—
Kind was the heart which taught that eye to melt,
And ready was that hand its aid to lend.
Still lively in that speaking mien appear
The virtues which were known his breast to warm;
E'en strangers must these lineaments revere,
And feel Benignity's surviving charm.
Long may those virtues emanate and rest
On that lov'd progeny that boast his name;
May his example fire each youthful breast,
And point the path to honourable fame.

Alas! my feeble rhymes can ill requite
That other precious boon to me assign'd:—
Yet Fancy views its mild reflected light
Return a fainter image of thy mind.

In moony radiance far below,
The mine its long meanders led;
And oft a mingled splendor shed,
In semblance of the show'ry bow.

As other metals mixt their beams,
Enamour'd of the silv'ry streams;
The Muse beheld their fairy sport,
Coursing along the twilight court:
She saw them as they lay in torpid slumbers,
As if to death congeal'd by magic numbers;
Till Vulcan, with a fiery wand,
Gave the terrific sign to rouse the slumb'ring band.

The white-wing'd mistress of the spell was there,
Sweetly round the rocky sphere
Her thrilling voice was heard, 'Ye spirits haste
'From the subterranean waste;
'Where the virgin silver lies,
'Glimmering to the nether skies.
'Bid the fervid power refine
'The purest portion of the mine;
'Not to deck the chariot gay,
'Glancing along the public way;
'Not with military pride
'The warriors manly brow to hide;
'Not to form the Wassail bowl,
'Where Comus lurks to snare the soul;
'Not the festive board to load,
'Where luxury enflames the blood.

'Ah! no, a noble matron claims your toils,
'A lasting tribute to her lord to pay.
'With a MEMORIAL from your richest spoils,
'She means to honour him, whose rustic lay

'*His* requiem sung, as to the setting ray
'Some melancholy bird, at evening's fall,
'Chants a sad descant, as the tints decay,
'Painted erewhile on summer's gaudy pall,
'And twilight's whispering gales to meditation call.'

Thus PIETY from parted worth
Acquires the boon by heaven assign'd
To call the nascent virtues forth,
And wing the young aspiring mind.
Thus, to the partner of your soul
You lead the pledges of your love;
While kindred minds above the pole
Your lessons aid, your cares approve,
Down from the Zenith comes the SCALE divine,
Made of materials far above the riches of the MINE.

A NOCTURNAL VIEW

OF

THE MOUNT NEAR DROMORE*,

Humbly inscribed to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Dromore.

FIRST PRINTED IN 1802.

NIGHT-WAND'RING spirit, whatsoe'er thy name,
Who marshall'd here of old thy warlike train,
Methinks I hear you mourn your faded fame
To the still air, in many a plaintive strain.

For deep in central gloom that demon weeps,†
Who, in a minstrel's form, enflam'd your pride,
When all, perhaps, you claim'd from Donard's steeps,
To the rich dales on Banna's flow'ry side.

In vain where Lagan leads his murm'ring wave,
You often seem an airy trump to wind,
To call thy bold battalions from the grave,—
Oblivion's shells thy sleeping legions bind.

And oft you court the coming breeze to swell,
The stormy concert of their martial song,
And call the water-fairies of the dell,
To join the chorus as they sport along.

* Supposed by some to be a tumulus, or burying place of an Irish chief; by others it is thought a place of martial rendezvous.

† See Spenser's account of the bards of Ireland.

Far other pageants on each sacred morn,
(Whose dawn the demons hate) salute the sight;
Far other sounds on balmy zephyrs borne,
The peasants to yon house of pray'r invite.

Far other troops in many a blooming file
Are seen to muster on the hills afar,
And bend their march to yonder hallow'd pile,
To learn Emmanuel's rudiments of war.

Where'er the sacred ensign waves on high
Upborne, tho' viewless, o'er the moving scene,
In thought I see the baffled tempters fly,
And dusky shadows flit across the green.

The crozier is their guide; no feeble hand
Is seen to raise the standard of the faith;
And oft their leader's voice directs the band
To ward the double wound of sin and death.

As yon bleak hills his fost'ring care proclaim,
With solemn groves, and smiling vistas, gay,*
His living care, a nobler source of fame,
The blooms of Salem to the sun display.

At his command the meliorated earth
The tender scion feeds from richer mould;
So when a mind of more etherial birth
He marks, his tendance bids its power unfold.

* Gay in the French sense of adorned.

Hail, rev'rend patron! hail, respected name,
Mute are the transports of the youthful bands;
But were they vocal, soon the trump of fame
Would send th' important theme to distant lands.

But should thy plaudit circle round the zones,
Poor is that cloudy theatre to thee;
A voice is heard amid the saintly thrones,
Prelusive to a nobler harmony.

For, as one penitent is joy above,
Faith, wing'd by hope, can hear the bands on high
Applauding, when, *betimes*, paternal love
Such numbers calls the hallow'd task to ply.

Long may the lessons taught by pious care,
That woke the sacred flame, its soarings guide,
And ages long, of lineal worth, declare
What virtues o'er the rising race preside.*

* The success of the Sunday-school of Dromore, under the *particular* patronage and direction of the Bishop, has been very remarkable; and as it is an institution of the highest importance to society, its good effects, in this instance, would deserve a larger detail than falls within the limits of a note. It was established by his Lordship eighteen years ago, and the number of scholars have often been above five hundred. Many of the pupils have, in that period, grown up, and have reflected honour upon their instructors, by their regularity of conduct, particularly during the late rebellion in 1798. No depredation, neither *then*, nor at any intervening period, since the Bishop came to reside there, has been committed in his demesne, though accessible to all. One remarkable instance of its good effects, is that of a boy who had been bred at this school, who, finding a purse with some money on the road, instead of secreting it, he immediately had it proclaimed by the town crier, that the owner might be ascertained. His Lordship has been at considerable expence in supplying not only the children, but the poor in his neighbourhood with bibles, prayer books, and religious tracts.

ON READING SOME MANUSCRIPT POEMS

WRITTEN BY

MISS STEWART,

A YOUNG LADY IN EDINBURGH.

Communicated by ROBERT ANDERSON, *Esq.*

THAT strain once more! it had *no* dying fall!
Tremendous minstrelsy! it shook my frame,
As, dizzy, thro' the wide ærial hall
The Muse upbore me on a wing of flame.

That strain once more! O many a year is flown
Since Collins struck the clanging lyre so strong,
When like the shock that runs from zone to zone,
I felt the sacred violence of song.

Our distance far, we, mortal minstrels, keep,
That round the purlieus of Parnassus stray,
Alone she climbs the formidable steep,
And eyes the beam of more than solar day.

At once,* almost with angel's ken, she views
Old Nature's mighty current ebb and flow,
That now the desolating conflict brews,
Now bids the vernal tints of Eden glow.

* See the Seraph, an ode, by Miss S. Poetical Register, Vol. 1st.

*With her I climb, aghast, the frozen wave,
Where the dim pole-star views the shipman's doom,
While Zembla's tempests thro' the cordage rave,
Till each man stands his own Gorgonian tomb.

With her I mount the proud Columbian steep,
To see the brooding storm expand its wings,
Which bending on the wood, with eagle sweep,
The verdant files around the valley flings.

The son of Fingal,† from his cloudy cave,
List'ning, attunes his airy harp to thine,
And follows, on thy track, o'er Ether's wave,
From the bright pole star to th' burning line.

Reclining on his Marathonian lance,
‡Old Æschylus demands, 'Who found the shell
'With which I us'd my audience to entrance,
'Or bid the tumult of the bosom swell?'

E'en mighty Shakespear marvels to behold
The sudden wonders of thy wizard hand,
There phantoms frown, and awful scenes unfold,
In gloomy contrast to his magic band.

But, when thy Seraph spreads her starry plume,
Her glories brighten as the song proceeds,
Ætherial splendours pierce the gilded gloom,
And the deep vista shews her wond'rous deeds.

* The Spirit of the Storm, by Miss S. Poetical Register, Vol. 2.
† Ossian.
‡ Æschylus, who fought at Marathon. See Miss S.'s Ode to Liberty

Young favourite of the Muse! accept the lay,
A primal offering from Ierne's coast,
Where, like the lark that hails the rising day,
I try to sing Edina's pride and boast.

And yet thou art unknown, except to few,
Who, as the genii, round the cradle wait
Of one ordain'd fair science to renew,
Or fix the fortune of her parent state.

So these observe the glorious mark afar,
On which, intent, you fix your kindling eye,
As the young eagle views the solar car,
And longs to follow through the glowing sky.

Is it thy lot a Thespian wreath to wear,
And bid the manes of the dead return;
Shall the fall'n patriot grace the funeral bier,
Or rival minds with kindling passions burn?

Or wilt thou seek the pure Aonian springs
That only to the favour'd few are known,
And, nobly rising from material things,
Aspire to make the MORAL WORLD thine own?

'Tis thine on eagle wing to mount the sky,
And see her gorgeous dome immensely spread;
O seize the sacred lightnings as they fly,
And strike triumphant Vice and Folly dead!

'Tis thine to claim the Muses noblest right,
O seize the holy harp in Zion strung,
And emulate the solemn bard* of night,
Or him†, who light's primæval glories sung.

* Young. † Milton. See his Hymn to Sight.

TO ROBERT ANDERSON, ESQ.

OF EDINBURGH.

EDITOR AND BIOGRAPHER OF THE BRITISH POETS.

*On his leaving the County Down.**

SEPT. 17, 1802.

Since late at Campbell's † friendly board
Of social hours we spent the last;
Campbell, by commoner or lord
Of that illustrious name, surpast
Seldom, in worth, or sense, or taste;
And Percy's praise and health went round—
How is our sunshine overcast,
When you retir'd from Ullin's bound;
E'en tuneful Hafiz ‡ seems to mope,
Like Patrick's dean bereft of Pope.

Deserted by the sinking gale,
Since you forsook the northern shore,
Like ships becalm'd, with furled sail,
Unmov'd by canvass or by oar,
We lie, nor longer now explore
Those islands, where the Muses play;
The potent magic acts no more,
And all our glimm'ring fires decay:
That shore, which late we trac'd with you,
Seem'd to presage a long adieu. §

* Where he had been on a visit to the Bishop of Dromore.

† Rev. Dr. Campbell of Newry.

‡ Thomas Slott, Esq. better known by the name of Hafiz, from his pleasing publications with that signature.

§ Rostrever.

We saw Mount Catherine o'er the tide *
  Salute the majesty of Mourne,
We saw Rostrever's sylvan pride
  The foamy spray indignant, spurn;
When on the beach by Neptune worne,
  Thro' sunny bowers the billows hoar,
With saphire, green and gold, adorn
  In fairy dance the winding shore;
Yet still the parting scene display'd
O'er all, a melancholy shade.

Ah! little thought the gaudy throng
  Whose ever changing groups we spy'd
Engag'd in pleasure's chace, along
  The level strand, the azure tide;
What nobler joys, by thee supplied,
  Might raise their minds above the scene,
Above what fancy e'er descry'd
  On moonlight wave, in woodland green;
Or when the radiant shafts of day
Thro' chequer'd shades on ocean play.

For, like thy country's pride of yore,
  The peerless knight of Ellerslie; †
Who wav'd on Ayr's romantic shore
  The beamy torch of liberty;

* The Bay at Carlingford.

† Wallace, the deliverer of Scotland.

And, searching round from sea to sea,
From glade obscure, or hollow rock,
His bold compatriots call'd, to free
The land from Edward's iron yoke;
You rally thus the tuneful train,
The cause of virtue to sustain.

The banded minstrels move along,
The descant rolls from hill to hill,
Fond zephyr propagates the song,
And charmed Echo answers still;
Whilst thou conduct'st with studious skill
The pomp, where'er the varied lay
May best the general bosom thrill,
Or where their files, in broad display,
As thy safe guidance they pursue,
May give their pageantry to view.

* The swains, from many an hamlet round,
Crowd, the fine melody to hear,
And list'ning stand in awe profound,
To the full concert swelling near;
While more than music from the sphere
Descends, their waken'd souls to raise
Above the shadows, dim and drear,
Where Comus rules the murky maze,
And charms with sin's alluring themes,
Fall'n Reason, in this land of dreams.

* See Note at the end.

Thine is the heav'n-distinguis'd boon
The soul of music to explore,
And to the blazonry of noon
The buried treasures to restore,
Hid by malignant critic's lore,
Or ne'er by mole-ey'd stupor seen,
The Muse of elegy once more
Wanders with thee through woodlands green,
And paints the varied joys and pains
Of life, in cities and on plains.*

Sages and legislators old
New honours earn'd by toils like thine,
Before the learned hand unroll'd
The glorious tale of Troy divine.
The hopes of Sparta's regal line
†Lycurgus left, to cull the store
Which Homer gave to chance malign
To scatter round Æolia's shore;
But HE brought home the matchless strains,
To harmonize Laconia's swains.

Belov'd by Science and the Muse—
—While some, a faint and partial ray
O'er Britain's Helicon diffuse;
Its ample round in open day
You shew, and all its scenes display,

* See Poems by Dr. Anderson, published with those of Græme in the collection of the works of the British Poets alluded to above.

† Lycurgus first collected the scattered rhapsodies of Homer.

And east and west thy labours hail,
  And oft you call the lasting lay
From the sequester'd humble vale.
  Young minstrels catch celestial fire
  From thee, and rapture crown's the lyre.

Could I like Adelina* sing
  Our friend now sailing on the main,
Could I pursue her rapid wing,
  Or emulate her lofty strain,
  I would not toil to chant, in vain,
That mind with varied stores replete.
  But ah! the Muse must now refrain,
And rest awhile her feeble feet,
  And, on her lonely hill reclin'd,
  Survey the picture in her mind.

* See the foregoing poem.

Note on Stanza 7.] To those who can appreciate such a publication as that mentioned above, and the abilities which it requires, the character given of it above will not appear exaggerated. Its extensive circulation is the most certain proof of its merit. It is a favourite collection not only in the rich and populous parts of these kingdoms, but in those little scattered rural societies which purchase books for their common perusal. This forms at least a presumption that a certain refinement of character, a justness of sentiment, and a consequent improvement of morals, are already gaining ground, in consequence of this and similar publications. This collection seems, however, to have obtained a general preference, from the mixture of poetry and biography (the most instructive, perhaps, of any species of literary composition) with which it is diversified by Dr. Anderson, not to mention the advantage of forming the judgment, which must be the consequence of the critical observations interspersed. Even in the country, I have observed a taste for poetical composition, more vigorous, perhaps, though less refined, and attended with less affectation, than what is perceived in more polished societies. It is but justice to Dr. Anderson to observe, that no pecuniary views had any share in engaging him in this undertaking.

MONODY

ON THE DEATH OF

THE REV. DR. HENRY LESLIE,

OF TANDRAGEE.

COUNTY OF ARMAGH, IRELAND.

FEBRUARY 1803.

Ah! why should hurried thought's tumultuous tide
Thus ever point, where rising from the womb
Of night, * the war-fiend threats the Christian world
With Stygian flag unfurl'd,
While, driven by tempests thro' th' ascending gloom—
Bearing the olive branch, with languid plume,
The dove of Concord knows not where to rest?
Sore recollection guides another way,
And mourning friendship leads me to the tomb
With Leslie's sad memorial deep imprest;
Seldom the grave possest a nobler prey
By Death rever'd, who long withheld his doom:
But Oh! lamented more, as longer known
Is he whose reliques fill this scanty room!—

Ye fairy fields of fiction, all in flower,
Farewell awhile! Avaunt, ye low-born cares!
Ah! would the Muse inspire those solemn airs
Suited to themes, that please the parted soul,
That spreads above the pole:
An angel pinion! But no heaven-sent dream
Is mine, no sacred stream

Of Pindus laves my lip! yet Friendship calls,
As best I may, to tune my simple reed,
And give to worth emtomb'd a rustic meed.

Phosphor! thy radiant eye, that seldom sees
The studious tribe prevent the new-born day,
Still spy'd him at that hour of sacred prime
Kindling Devotion's lamp at Salem's ray,
Or deep conversing with some ancient sage,
Pond'ring the wisdom of a distant age.
Then cheerful as the soaring lark in May
He saw the social Band his smile return
While many an happy morn,
Vary'd with pure enjoyment, roll'd away!
Time, as he pass'd, no sad memorial took,
Nor view'd the scene with stern upbraiding look.

Lamented change! these scenes are now no more.
Never shall we, in those sequestered bowers
Planted by thee, beneath the chequer'd shade,
Protract, on pleasing themes of various lore,
The swift meridian hours!—
Where yonder summit lifts her chaplet green,
And crowns the spreading scene,
And by yon groves, and floods that wind below,
Oft in the still noon, and on evening's gale
Long shall be heard no fabled sounds of woe,
And many a warm and tributary tear
Shall fall for thee in yonder long, long vale,
When memory calls to view thy passing bier.

THERE not to barren theories confin'd,
Of the first good, first perfect, and first fair,
But in communicated good, his mind
Found its congenial element, and drew
Cœlestial vigour from the rapt'rous view
Of want reliev'd,* when with malignant eye
Thron'd in a brazen sky,
The swart star look'd upon the with'ring field,
He task'd the winds, he task'd the rolling wave.
His golden key the miser hoard reveal'd,
And where the pale-ey'd harbinger of death
Rear'd his black standard, there he flew to save;
His hand disarm'd the fell anatomy,
His cordial boon recall'd the fleeting breath.

Ah! what avails the charitable boon,
Offer'd by unclean hands, and spirit prone?
The donor hopes in vain the heavenly prize,
No such unholy incense climbs the skies:
Tho' fraught with all the sweets of every zone,
They rest, like noisome fogs beneath the moon;
Nor plague, nor famine, in *his* view, that weighs
The sum of things, such dire disasters bring
As Vice, altho' her lib'ral hand may raise
Sweet Mercy's fane by every wood and spring.
As the bright day-star to the fen-fed blaze,
To these were Leslie's charities, refin'd
By Virtue, heaven-inspir'd, of vulgar praise
Reckless, to choirs above

* During the years of scarcity, 1800 and 1801, Dr. L. purchased a large quantity of rice, and other provisions for the poor.

Accordant only. From that heavenly store,
Richer than minted ore,
He drew a living treasure, which supply'd
In his example an unfailing tide
Of nobler gifts that better life improve,
And all the virtues from the realms of day
Seem'd in yon glades to point the heaven-ward way.

Yet never did the stern censorian face
Of bigotry, or blind misjudging zeal,
His mild innoxious cheerfulness disgrace.
No Pharisæan veil
He wore, nor from the gay and social sphere
Retir'd, with look austere,
Where guiltless joy presides: yet much in scorn
He held it, when he roam'd the Latian vales,
In youth, his time in vagrant glee to waste,
Or steep his lips in Circe's luscious bowl,
There, not with listless soul
The charms of truth in fairy fiction drest
He scann'd, and much he loved the studious shade,
Where contemplation soars to heights sublime,
And oft with Tully and with Maro stray'd,
And oft the long historic page unroll'd,
With heroes' names adorn'd and sages old,
With deep thought musing on the spoils of time.

There the young patriot often mourn'd to see
The various blessings of a bounteous God

Abundant, on the race of man bestow'd,
By sloth abus'd, and vice and luxury,
When freedom fled the land. The scenes of blood
He wept, when social ties
Yielded to fabled sanctions of the skies,
When superstition, with her galling chain
And fiery zeal, the plagues of happiest climes,
Debas'd the powers of man, or plung'd in crimes;
Ethereal essence from these baneful weeds
He drew, and learn'd to rule the rustic train
By the pure lessons of primæval times.
By mild, attractive arts his flock to win,
He chose, as gifted bards by powerful rhymes
Were said of old the bedded stones to move,
And from its station lead the rooted grove.
Thus, gradual, from the dire Satanic gin
He drew the wretched thralls of worldly love,
And disenchanted oft the slave of sin.
No slack preceptor, for he led the way,
And, with Nestorean eloquence, display'd
To sons the lessons which he taught the sire,
And when long years had thinn'd the lax array,
And bade the senior files at length retire,
The hoary soldier of his God betray'd
No languor, but with true celestial fire,
And heaven-sent energy, the juniors led
The self same way by which their fathers sped.

Time, that has laid in dust imperial thrones,
And bade them fleet on Dissolution's wing.

Or civiliz'd by Law barbarian zones,
When man had found his mind's elastic spring,
That suffers not the waken'd soul to cling
To this low planet, from his rolling spheres,
His various pageants to his lengthen'd years,
In all the solemn pomp of light and shade
Disclos'd; and still each spring, with garlands new
Of flowers Elysian, nurst with heavenly dew,
Successive bound his venerable head.
Thus long his station, like the steadfast star,
He kept, while sad vicissitude around
Whelm'd in the dark profound
Her hecatombs of fell disease and war.
And as thro' parting clouds the radiant light
That leads the van of morn
Bids the dim shadows from her path remove,
So from his look, that beam'd celestial love,
The forms of guilt and grief were seen to fly,
When with parental eye and tuneful tongue
Proclaiming, like the chorus of the sky,
Repentance, peace, and joy, to souls forlorn,
With heavenly themes he cheer'd the list'ning throng:
Or when the extensive charity he plann'd,
Or dealt the private dole to want or woe.
E'en yet his name like incense charms the air,
By many a fervent aspiration fann'd,
Where soul and body still were known to share
A father's counsel and a father's care.

O ! for a Muse, like those he lov'd, to praise
His deep affection to the tuneful train ;
For much he priz'd the poets' lasting lays,
His fancy kindled at their potent strain ;
Nor those the least that o'er the Celtic main,
From Arno, * deck'd with never fading bays,
In British bosoms woke the gen'rous flame ;
When many a rude ear caught the notes of fame,
From isle to isle along the northern wave ;
When other streams and other groves among
The thralls of sin, and superstition's slave,
Imbib'd the spirit of the lofty song,
And gradual felt their mental clogs remove,
The Muse consign'd him arms to combate vice ;
She taught him how to lift the mind above
The base entanglements of earthly ties ;
He priz'd the heav'n-sent boon, nor that alone,
But ev'ry useful walk to science known
Were his ; and in the new and living road
He made them meet, and there securely trode.

Farewell ! beloved spirit, must I say
For ever ? No !—Ah ! still may hope survive,
And not in vain, that from this cumb'rous clay
Releast at last, I yet with you may live ;
And as together oft we lov'd to stray,
So there the life-dispensing power may give
The means, to meet on that delightful shore,
Where friends with friends unite to part no more.

* Dr. L. was intimately acquainted with the best productions of the Italians, and had studied the works of the venerable father of modern poetry with particular attention.

TO

MISS BISSET,*

ON

HER RECOVERY

FROM

A DANGEROUS ILLNESS.

FEBRUARY, 1804.

When winter sadden'd all the sky,
And the discordant storm beat high :
Upon the misty brows of Mourne,
In pleasing dreams by Fancy borne,
In Galla's bowers I seem'd to stray ;
List'ning to thy soothing lay,
While holy Friendship hover'd nigh.
Little I thought that fell disease
Had fetter'd in tyrannic peace,
That hand, which thro' each trembling chord
The maze of harmony explor'd.
And not thy lyre, methought, alone, was mute
Cecilia, bending o'er her silver lute,
Fancy beheld, with all her choral train,
The descant falter'd in its solemn swell ;
For the sweet magic of thy potent strain,
In Cambria's deep vales she remember'd well,
When shadowy minstrels, from the rugged height,
Of ancient Penmanmaur seem'd list'ning with delight.

* Of Loughgall, county Armagh, Ireland.

*'Twas when the chafing rocks reply'd,
In cadence to the sinking blast,
The rising moon above the tide,
Afar, a crimson radiance cast;
When half escap'd the gulf of death,
Faint, and with scarce recover'd breath,
The tempest-beaten seamen moor
Their vessel to the welcome shore;
Then haste away, the means to find
The dying spark of life to save;
Half-scatter'd by the raging wind,
And half extinguish'd by the wave.
Then softly on the undulating air,
Soothing the rugged brow of care,
Thro' the still night thy measures stole,
And touch'd with joy each sinking soul;
No more they found their bosoms languish,
The Muse had charm'd away their anguish.
At every cadence, care-expelling,
Every heart with rapture swelling,
Found the sympathetic strain
Renew the harmony within,
New spirits danc'd in every vein,
Late deaden'd by the tempest's din.
Famine and parching toil their prey resign'd,
And the charm'd sense partook the banquet of the mind.

* This curious instance of the power of music, occurred in Wales sometime in the summer of 1802, when Miss Bisset, amusing herself with her piano forte one evening, after a violent storm, perceived some forlorn figures, dripping wet, who had long stood at her window, whom she found to be sailors lately shipwrecked. It is scarce necessary to add, that they experienced that humane attention which their condition required.

This the SAINT remember'd well,
Proud of her favourite's heaven-taught skill,
And 'Oh!' she cry'd, 'that chorded shell
'Must it forget the heart to thrill?'
'No—virgins! try those magic numbers,
'That call Hygeia from the fields of air,
'Bid the sylph ascend her car,
'And hover o'er her as she slumbers,
'Infuse her balmy essence in her breast,
'And from the lab'ring heart expel the lurking pest.'
'Tis done—the kindling spark of life
Again relumes the languid eye,
And, vanquish'd in th' unequal strife,
Distemper's baffled demon's fly.
And Health and Harmony again,
With blended powers, resume their reign.
Thus, oh! thus may coming Peace,
Thus may heavenly Concord shine
Thro' Desolation's gloom, with ray divine,
And bid the moral plague that sickens Nature cease.

Hear THOU,* who to thy favour'd servants hand
That lamp consign'd, which thro' Creation's maze
Disclos'd the wonders of thy ways,
And shew'd, what love combin'd with wisdom plann'd;

* This alludes to Paley's natural theology and Mungo Park's travels in Africa, which were published at no very distant period from each other, and which the author happened to peruse near this time, on a visit at the Rev. Archdeacon Bisset's, at Loughgall. This, it is hoped, will account for the subsequent part of this rhapsody. As to the mode of connexion, many precedents might be adduced, if this had any claim to the merit of a lyric composition.

But chief where man's stupendous frame,
With all its complicated powers,
The standing miracles of heaven proclaim,
While Nature trembles and adores.
Then, when all nature murmur'd deep applause,
You chang'd the hymn to notes of woe,
You bade the hardy wanderer * go,
Th' asserter of thy violated laws.
The burning sands display the tragic stage
Where victims of inhuman rage;
The living wonders of thy love divine,
In anguish groan, in sorrow pine!
From the regions of the north
You call'd the young undaunted spy,
At thy command he issues forth,
Patient, beneath a fiery sky;
Not with gold to crown his toils,
Not with elephantine spoils,
Nor the labours of the bee,
Nor the aromatic tree;
But pictures of Demonian wrath,
Deeds of horror, scenes of death,
The sounding scourge, the galling chain,
And all oppression's iron reign
He limns, and with a pen of light
Proclaiming Nature's injur'd right,
Then holds the horrid sketch on high
Till Pity's sacred fount o'erflows in each relenting eye.

* Mr. Park.

Be these twin pictures ne'er disjoin'd,
By thy behest to thoughtless mortals given;
Ye holy genii, sent from heaven,
Imprint their awful lessons on the mind.
Bid that mental music flow
That gives the sympathetic glow;
Bid that hollow'd strain revive,
That hatred cannot hear and live,
With your choir's ecstatic swell
The demons of the soul expell;
That last, that worst distemper chase,
Nor let th' exterminating hand
In Afric's blood* our sentence trace,
Nor swell the dread account with many a slaughter'd band.

* The author does not enter into the *merits* of the question on the slave trade, but merely gives this small tribute to the cause of humanity, which, it is hoped, has gained *some* advantages even by the discussion of this momentous question, and probably will recover still more.

IMITATION OF AN ITALIAN ODE,

ADDRESSED

TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

(Biographer of Lorenzo de Medici)

BY T. J. MATHIAS, ESQ.

Prefixed to his new Edition of Tiraboschi's Storia della Poesia Italiana. 1803.

While cross my sphere of vision borne,
By Fancy call'd, the tuneful throng,
In moving splendour like the morn
An airy squadron, flits along,
And still as thro' the fadeless grove
March the masters of the lyre,
Apollo's tree, with signs of love,
Bends to salute the hallow'd choir,
To THEE whose periods, sweetly flowing,
Charms on every theme bestowing,
Lead thro' the maze of time, with soft control
The captivated soul;
I turn, O Flamen of the Muse,
Whose potent spell renews
Her sacred lamp's extinguish'd light,
And calls new glories from oblivion's night.
Wing'd with no ignoble aim,
A sounding shaft, from Pindar's bow,
I send, and barb it with the flame*
That in my breast begins to glow,

* Arrows barbed with fire. Milton, B. 6.

Sequester'd from the vulgar throng
Of poets, while Valclusa's spring
And Dirce's fount inspire the song,
Let me not mount on flagging wing,
While, Roscoe! thee I call,
Whose sapient hand withdrew the pall
From many a monument of ages past,
And bade their splendours all revive, with time itself to last.

Deeds heroic, arts divine,
Live along thy classic line;
I saw, and gloried in the view,
How the nymphs of Arno drew
From Aganippe's holy well
New supplies, their springs to swell;
I saw the winds to Britain bring
All the Muses on the wing;
I saw them in their rapid race
O'er the glowing welkin trace
A path, by which the soaring soul
Mounts to Fame's ætherial goal.
But oh! what means yon pale, indignant shade,
That seems their sad, forsaken haunts to mourn?
Lamenting loud yon piles in ruin laid,
The fell oppressor and the tyrant's scorn,
And all the plagues by sad Etruria borne,
While, stung to fury by the mental pest
Which memory feeds, and long by anguish worn,
Midst his immortal train alike distrest,
He shows the mould'ring throne that good Lorenzo prest.

That forge he enters, whence, with wars alarms
Untir'd, the furious god of battle bore
Napoleon's axe, and midst the din of arms
Display'd it, like a sceptre, dipp'd in gore,
Fashion'd of gold and steel. The frighted shore
Of Nile and Ganges heard the boast profane,
When his dire edict threaten'd to restore
The desolating rage of Tamerlane,
And over Asia's climes to stretch his iron reign.
But midst the dread Vulcanian cells,
Hark! what heavenly music swells!
Old Tuscany's romantic strain
The minstrel seems to wake again.
And while imagination burns,
On THEE his earnest eye he turns.
In all the majesty of song,
While voice and hand the notes prolong.
"O thou that giv'st to fame
The Medicean name,
And from the shadows of oblivion drew;
Bellona's lips in vain
O'er that distinguish'd plain
The baleful notes of devastation blew;
Vainly in Arno's vale,
The Muses' cloisters pale,
The spiteful demon strove to lay in dust.
Once more thy genius warms
The dead, with awful charms
Ascending from the tomb, a fractur'd bust.
An unexpected star,
From northern climes afar,

The golden morn you seem to lead along,
With keen, resistless ray
You chas'd the clouds away,
That o'er the Latian hills portentous hung.
Thro' parting glooms of night
We spy the welcome light
That in the vaward of a day appears
To last for evermore,
And on the Tuscan shore
To wake her Genius from his rest of years.
Pictur'd on thy page, we find
The conquests of the active mind,
And all the wonders of our story,
Deck'd by thee in deathless hues,
Wak'd by thy life-inspiring Muse,
In their palace, robb'd of glory,
No more our buried virtue sleeps,
(Tho' overhead Bellona's blast
Like the vollied thunder past)
Nor an eternal sabbath keeps,
But at the heavenly call, instinctive, soars.
Joys terrestrial, glittering stores,
The treasures of a day;
As far below th' immortal mind
She leaves, to joys from earth refin'd
Aspiring, where the seraph's lay,
And amaranthine crowns the human victors pay.

"On thee, expectant of their fame,
The ROMAN Muses wait,

And thro' the Vatican's disclosing gate,
In shining pageant come, their meed to claim:
There are the sages, heaven-inspir'd,
And there the bards, by fancy fir'd,
And there th' assembled sons of art,
That wake the soul and warm the heart.
Distinguish'd by his heavenly smile,
Urbino* leads the learned file,
But Angelo's majestic shade alone,
Holding all rivalry in scorn,
Inspir'd and led by powers unknown,
His own terrific path pursues;†
And from his mirror deals to Eden's Muse
Thick flashes of empyreal day,
That in his favourites fancy play,‡
And show the realms of bliss and scenes of joy forlorn.

"From thee my bleeding country prays,
Thy classic charm her woes to cheer,
And hopes thy skilful hand will raise
Great Leo to Lorenzo's sphere.§
While from yon green Ascræan height,
The soul-reviving breezes blow,
Young Fancy mounts, on pinions light,
And reason's genial scions grow;

* Urbino Raffaelle.

† Da Michel Agnolo la terribi via.

‡ See the gallery of Milton, by Fuseli.

§ Alluding to the *Life of Leo the Tenth*, expected from Mr. Roscoe. (Since published.)

To thee the Bergamean sage*
His homage sends across the sea.
And for his Muse-ennobled page,
No panegyrist asks but thee,
Tho' midst the Heliconian choir,
The master of the golden lyre†
Struck for him the sounding chord,
And instant, at the sovereign word,
Pindus‡ parting shades invite
Her fav'rite to the mystic rite,
Among Italia's tuneful train,
Savona's trump the descant leads,§
Ferrara joins the lofty strain,‖
Surrentum fills her vocal reeds,
While Echo down his native stream,
The notes of Guidi bears along.¶
'Tis Roscoe gives the general theme,
And tunes again the Tuscan song.
And all Hesperia's minstrelsy combin'd
His polish'd lines applaud, and amplitude of mind.

Late I saw, but not with dread,
The CRADLE where the Muse was bred,
By Fate's inexorable doom,
Converted to her baleful tomb,

* Tirabsochi, the literary historian of Italy.

† Apollo.

‡ Country of Chiabocra.

§ Country of Ariosto.

‖ Native place of Tasso. See Tiraboschi Storia de Poesia Italiana, Vol. 3, P. 235.

¶ Alessandro Guidi, a celebrated lyric poet, born at Pavia.

While o'er her dust a deadly brand,
Waving in the victor's hand,
Shone horrible, and o'er the plains
Held in chace the frighted swains.
From Hesperia's mournful bound,
Where desolation reigns around,
I heard her swans, with moulted wing,
Their last despairing dirges sing,
And, bleeding on their native shore,
The fatal Celtic shaft deplore.

*" Banish'd sisters, three times three,
Mourn no more the fates' decree.
Hark! the hallow'd sound I hear!
Golden times shall soon appear.
See! thro' the deep revolving spheres returning,
Another age of gold begins her race,
And Sol, with more auspicious splendour burning,
Shall chase the sickly gloom from Nature's face;
And now, the day-spring from the boundless deep
Of æther, marches on, with banners gay;
A brighter sun will climb yon eastern steep,
Never to paint the clouds with setting ray."

The spectre ceast, and took her flight—
Instant thro' the shades of night;
A crimson banner wav'd afar
Emblaz'd with many a burning star,

* The Muses.

And, rising soon, a column tall
Seem'd to prop the heavenly hall.
Tuscan emblems there were seen,
And many a Tuscan rhyme between ;
Then, with more than mortal air,
From behind, an heavenly fair
Was seen at leisure to advance ;
In her better hand a lance
She held, her left a trident bore,
Minerva's ægis flam'd before :
Over land and over main
She look'd, with hope chastis'd by pain ;
Then, with a pen of fire she drew
Those ardent characters in view ;
" HERE, WHEN ALL THY TOILS ARE PAST,
" HESPERIA'S GENIUS ! REST AT LAST."
Anon, the thunder of the battle rose,
And o'er the troubl'd scene, in horror, came ;
But soon we heard Apollo's lute compose
The rising feud, and charm its fury tame.

Advent'rous song ! if e'er you see
That classic stream, belov'd by me ;
Pardon, in ROSCOE'S name, implore
For alien hands, that wander'd o'er
The Tuscan strings : by love imprest,
The fav'rite theme my soul possest ;
But, if unnotic'd there you stray,
And Latian taste rejects the lay,

It will suffice if THAMES bestows
A native wreath to bind my brows,
When first to thee, her banks along,
I rais'd the loud TRIUMPHAL song.

VISIONS

OF

WOODSTOCK.*

THE

PRIZE POEM

FOR THE YEAR 1777.

* This and the following poem ought to have appeared earlier in the volume, but were delayed from the difficulty of finding a copy in London.

The scene of the following little piece is laid at Woodstock, during the captivity of *Elizabeth*, who was confined there by her sister *Queen Mary*.

VISIONS

OF

WOODSTOCK.

Ye lonely shades, where Rosamond allur'd
Her Henry's steps from Glory's paths to stray;
Where, in the roseate bow'r of bliss, immur'd,
Reckless, he saw his laurel'd pride decay.

How brook'd the genius of yon solemn grove,
His ancient haunts by lawless love profan'd?
Disdain'd not his pure feet those lawns to rove,
Till late the * lyre once more his presence gain'd!

His magic lyre the mighty minstrel ply'd;
The list'ning Dryads to their haunts return'd;
A fresher verdure cloath'd the prospect wide,
And brighter hues the flow'ry banks adorn'd.

No trivial purpose bids his numbers flow;
No trivial guest those hallow'd bounds await:
—Meek Virtue here shall shun th' impending blow,
And here Religion lodge her sacred freight.

* In the time of Chaucer, the father of English poetry, who was born near *Woodstock*.

Hark ! Superstition lifts her savage voice !
  See ! kindred bands dissolve, and love recede !
The pastor's hand th' imploring flock destroys ;
  And Persecution bares her ruffian blade !

Ev'n Mercy's self forsakes the bloody throne ;
  The Queen,* relentless, sees a sister led
By alien hands, unfriended and alone,
  Where the rude prison rears her awful head.

Thy gates, O Woodstock ! ope with sullen sound ;
  In dismal view thy haggard walls appear !
Starting, the royal captive gaz'd around,
  And down her pale cheek stole th' unheeded tear.

The jarring valves the stern attendants close !
  Her dreary lot the silent princess eyes ;
And as her fancy teem'd with future woes,
  Thus burst her passion intermix'd with sighs :

" Look down, great Henry ! from the realms above,
  If earthly cares can reach thy holy rest,
Behold the fruits of thine ill-omen'd love,
  Friendless, forlorn, by causeless hate opprest !

" Oh ! would to Heav'n, thy unrelenting rage
  Had erst involv'd me in a mother's doom ;
How easy death in that unthinking age,
  How soft the passage to an early tomb ?

* Mary.

" But now reflection points the coming blow,
And mem'ry joins her keen, malignant light;
I see the deadly purpose of the foe,
And deprecate in vain the dreadful sight!

" But who shall dare her private woes to mourn,
When bleeding ENGLAND pours the gen'ral groan?
When pale Religion points to CRANMER's urn,
And holy Frenzy guards the bloody throne?

" Ill-fated England! unsubdu'd before!
'Tis thine to suffer, and 'tis mine to weep;
In vain the frowning cliffs protect thy shore,
And vain, with all her storms, thy circling deep.

" Thine inbred foe, the demon of the soul,
Converts thy sceptre to an iron rod;
Soft pity sinks beneath his dire control,
And the proud Hierarch dares belie his God.

" Rome's abject hirelings now infest the coast,
Where erst the hardy Roman learn'd to fear;
Where *Gaul's proud victor saw the British host
Mock the keen light'ning of the lifted spear.

" But now, e'en hope forsakes the mourning plain,
No friendly ray pervades the settled gloom;
The prospect lours beneath the frown of SPAIN,
And silent nations wait th' impending doom.

* Julius Cæsar.

While thus the royal maid her sorrow spoke,
Night stole unheeded on her rising woes;
And slumber lock'd her sense, but Fancy woke,
And, in her dreams, an aged minstrel rose.

A tuneful harp of antique form he bore,
Drest like the bards of old, a quaint attire!
And though long years had snow'd his temples o'er,
His eye preserv'd the poet's genuine fire.

And this the awful prelude of his song:
"Hope shall revisit soon the mourning plain;
E'en now thy name yon heavenly choirs among
Resounds, the future sov'reign of the main.

"Heav'n-sent, those once-lov'd bounds my steps invade;
Thy causeless grief commission'd to expel!
Of old a * tenant of this fairy shade,
Where oft my wood-notes wild were heard to swell.

"Here, † warlike Henry his unhelmed brow
Would oft recline, to listen to my lyre;
Oft would his ‡ son his genuine race avow,
And shew faint glimm'rings of his future fires.

"Yet to have pleas'd the royal ear of old
Seems poor ambition to my present charge;

* Chaucer.
† Henry the Fourth of England.
‡ Henry the Fifth.

Of Fate the glorious purpose to unfold,
And show the counsels of the sky at large.

" Trac'd by the awful counsels of the sky,
Two paths of glory to thy choice are given ;
Mark ! as the visions flit before thine eye,
And may thine option meet the smile of Heaven."

He said; and soon, obedient to his wand,
Wide o'er the prospect spread an iron gleam ;
The throng'd pavilions hide the martial strand,
And in the air unnumber'd ensigns stream.

But lo ! the cross of England waves afar !
The banded millions mix in mortal fight ;
And, hov'ring o'er the wide-extended war,
The foe of mankind soars with stern delight.

Those * to sustain, and these to overthrow
Th' imperial ensign, toil in bloody fray ;
And still the deadly contest seems to grow
Where'er the winds its crimson folds display.

Where'er the fiery meteor seems to wave,
In civil rage the broken bands disjoin ;
Loud Discord's voice is heard around to rave,
And busy fiends the social ties untwine.

* Success of Elizabeth in sowing dissention among her enemies. See Hume and Robertson.

Then the stern ruler of the azure deep,
Seem'd o'er the scene his triple mace to wield ;
The wild waves spread around, with murm'ring sweep,
And ocean hid the late ensanguin'd field.

Around the stormy capes the fleets, far seen
Advancing in a line, for battle form ;
And now, a narrow interval between,
They meet with loud salute and dire alarm !

The flash, abrupt, foreruns the brazen roar :
Responsive thunders roll around the bay ;
The sulph'rous vapour spreads from shore to shore.
Hiding the horrors of the doubtful day.

*The curtain'd clouds divide ; a scene appears
Of flames, and driving wrecks, and recent gore !
Eliza's name the gale in triumph bears !
Eliza's name resounds from shore to shore !

Distant, at length the martial notes decay,
And soon the whit'ning sails are lost to view ;
The wat'ry prospect seems to fleet away,
And smiling Summer clothes the fields anew.

Fair seem'd the scene, but unsubdu'd and wild,
With, here and there reclin'd, an uncouth swain,
Who, with rude songs the vacant hours beguil'd,
Or, musing, heard the pebbled rill complain.

* Defeat of the Spanish Armada.

Sudden the deep and lonely woods among
Was heard the solemn music of the lyre;
The rude tribes crowd around the magic song,
And rapture seem to catch the heav'nly fire.

Nor caught in vain; for o'er the savage sense
Mild reason seem'd to steal with gentle pace:
New habits grow, and new designs commence,
As on the *nymph* the thronging rustics gaze.

*Alma her name, her golden locks betray'd;
Her race deriv'd from him who rules the day;
A pearly zone her azure vest upstay'd,
Giv'n by the Sov'reign whom the floods obey.

Her voice explain'd the lessons of her lyre;
Her sainted look enforc'd the heav'nly song:
Her lectures seem'd new wisdom to inspire,
And mould the instincts of th' admiring throng.

Soon o'er the fields the congregation spread;
A milder aspect soon adorn'd the plain;
Instant before their steps disorder fled,
And Arts and Culture follow'd in her train.

Scatter'd around, the jocund hamlet rose,
And, girt with harvest's boon, the village gay,
Wide-stretching mounds the echoing main oppose,
And cities far their spiry pride display.

* Establishment of the University of Dublin.

* Above the rest a stately pile was seen,
And issuing radiant thence a chosen band,
† Who mark'd in measur'd lots the smiling green,
And portion'd to the swains their destin'd land.

‡ Some, when rude contests rose the swains among,
With healing words dispell'd the rising jar;
§ And some were taught with soft mellifluous song,
To cheer their toils beneath the sultry star.

‖ Some taught the seaman to direct his prow
O'er the broad Main, by mild Arcturus led;
¶ And some explor'd the secret depths below,
To find what nature there in silence bred.

** Some o'er the glebe induc'd the kindly show'r,
Hast'ning the tardy spring with potent pray'r;
And when the wintry sky began to lour,
With Heav'n-taught voice beguil'd the pangs of care.

The scene smil'd lovely, and in smiles withdrew;
The bard alone remain'd, and thus began:
"These future prospects op'ning to thy view,
'Tis thine, with Heav'n-directed eye to scan."

"Either on conquest's purple wing to rise,
Or deck with peaceful hand the savage plain;
To raise old England's flag in hostile skies,
Or nobler realms, with peaceful arts, to gain."

* The College. † Mathematicians. ‡ Statesmen and Lawyers
§ Poets. ‖ Astronomers. ¶ Natural Philosophers. ** Divines.

"'Tis thine to chuse"—"Nor be the choice delay'd
Sudden, tho' still entranc'd, the maid reply'd;
"Be mine to triumph in the peaceful shade,
Far from the dazzling pomp of martial pride."

"His captive legions let the victor shew;
Be mine the empire o'er the willing soul;
The vet'ran bands of vice to overthrow,
And ignorance and error to control."

"Be mine to rule the silent, studious train,
Who form the manners and the man refine:
Whose milder glories own no guilty stain,
Whose peaceful brows no bloody wreath entwine.

"Thus myriads yet unborn shall gladly own,
With unbought praise, my long remember'd sway,
And, plausive, hail my ACADEMIC THRONE,
When trophied arches fall, and urns decay."

"Some new PYTHAGORAS then may boast an eye
To trace the deeper wonders of the sphere;
Some TULLY's thunder shake the northern sky,
And pour conviction on the gen'ral ear."

"Some kindly hand may bid the laurel spring,
E'en in yon drear uncultivated soil;
Some friendly patron teach the muse to sing,
And deathless strains reward the gen'rous toil."

She spoke ; and thus the gentle bard reply'd :
" Still may you thus protect the gentle Muse ;
Lo ! Heav'n, by me, hath thus thy judgment try'd,
And mark'd, well pleas'd, thy far-extended views.

" Alike in arts of peace and martial might,
Old England's genius dooms thee to excel :"
He spoke—and mingled with the shades of night ;
His lyre symphonious sent a sweet farewel.

TO

WILLIAM PRESTON, ESQ.

ON HIS

TRAGEDY

ENTITLED

DEMOCRATIC RAGE.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1793.

WHAT mighty spirit wing'd thy way
  Thro' mingling storms of loud misrule,
And bade thee send the shaft of day
  Thro' the deep gloom of Faction's school?—
Who taught thy keen and steadfast eye,
The orgies of the fiends to spy;
And catch the forms with rapid glance,
Circling in the moon-struck dance?
Who gave the power, with "ken profound,"
The gulph of Bourbon's* soul to sound;
His bosom fiend,† and stern Marat,
Exulting o'er dismember'd law?
Did Milton lend the daring plume,
That swept of old the Stygian gloom,
Where, thron'd amidst the eternal jar,
Chaos calls his clans to war.
Thy friend, who mark'd of old, thy matin ray,
  The splendour of thy noon exults to view;
Long may the radiance of thy coming day,
  With propagated light its course pursue.

* Orleans. † Robespierre.

The Muse that trenchant weapon gave
(Temper'd in Aganippe's stream,
And edg'd with Truth's eternal beam)
That mark'd Medusa for the grave.
Like Perseus,* on his plumy steed,
On Pegasæan wing you soar'd,
When late, from lasting durance freed,
The monster rear'd her form abhorr'd.
And (as the fiend's petrific glance,
Was not for mortal eye to view)
From that pure buckler's bright expanse,
(Which Fancy gave) the veil you drew.
And there the Gorgon image caught,
Then, (how to aim the speeding blow,
By the reflecting mirror taught,)
Dismist her to the shades below.
Thy daring hand the snaky tresses held,
And hung the pale, expiring features high,
A warning to those favour'd isles reveal'd,
Like a dire comet in an evening sky.

'Twas not alone to foster mirth,
Or sooth a dull and vacant hour,
The Muse was sent to visit earth,
Gifted with more than mortal power.
(Tho' such is deem'd her humble trade,
Among the sordid sons of clay,)
But when foul mists the mind invade,
And passions cloud the mental day,

* In Mythologic History, Perseus is represented, before he attacked the Gorgon (whose sight was supposed to turn her beholders into stone) as viewing her image in the mirror of his shield, and learning thence how to take his aim.

When Licence lifts her Gorgon face,
In the fair mask of Freedom drest;
And calls her miscreated race
To share the Bacchanalian feast.

When torpid Reason seems to stand,
Deploring her insulted laws,
The Muse with lightning arms *her* hand,
And bids her vindicate her cause.
This was her boast, in years of yore,
When honours due adorn'd her name;
And, shall she wake on Liffey's shore,
Without her meed, the patriot's flame?
Forbid it, Pride! let Eirin learn at last,
With due esteem the Muses' boon to prize;
Seldom such blessings come, and part in haste,
The rarest bounty of the frugal skies.

ODE TO FROST.

WRITTEN IN A SERIES OF DAMP GLOOMY WEATHER

IN DECEMBER 1802.

When will you pierce the settled gloom,
Goddess of the spangled hair,
Whose rigid and unyielding robe,
Wrought in Aquilon's iron loom,
Hurtles dicordant in the gale,
As when the God of Arms in anger shakes his mail.
O'er what portion of the globe
Hovers now thy snowy car?
Where do you sift the sleet, or mould the driving hail?
Or does your wrath compose
The dragon of the deep,
When his stern eyelids close
For many a moon to sleep?—
Now further still the sun retires,
And Cynthia veils her borrow'd fires.
Mean you still to keep aloof,
Nor let us see the twinkling stars,
Till Hades claims the heavenly roof,
And Chaos wakes her ancient jars?
Or is this beamless gloom
An harbinger of woes to come;

*When from Columbia's regions hurl'd,
Mental darkness whelms the world?
And should you still your aid deny
To chase the rheums that load the sky,
Hope not to see our nerves unbrace
When grim War shews his gorgon face.
We need you not—although you steel'd
†The Cimbri for the mortal fray,
And led them from an iron field
To riot in the sweets of May.
We need thee not—the magnet's spell,
Though clouds on clouds involve the poll,
Conducts our fleets, and Triton's shell
No less inspires the warrior's soul
Than when the deep serene
O'erlooks the wavy green.
This Maese can tell, when Britain's thunder
Swept her fen-born fogs away;
And Sirius view'd, with eye of wonder,
The night-flame in Canopus' bay.
Thus mount our spirits from a spring
That Faith and Freedom still supply;
Our eagle virtues spread the wing
In all the changes of the sky.
Despondence and Delusion breathing round
Their spells, may boast awhile their filmy toils;
But Fortitude and Truth will soon confound
The work, and to the winds disperse their spoils.

* Some remarkable infidel productions were, about this time, announced in the public prints, as soon to be expected from America.

† Invasion of the Roman empire by the northern tribes.

Above yon arch, where Iris bends,
And paints the falling rain;
Above the vapour's dark domain.
The Bard of Hope ascends.*
Above the tract of snows,
Thro' purer æther still he goes,
Than e'er your breath refin'd.
See! with what hardihood of mind
He mounts to Odin's hall;†
The brazen portal rings,
Heimdall hears his call,‡
The mighty minstrel sings,
While in his song the battle thunders;
The mailed power of Combat wonders;
And, listning with delighted ear,
Hears the distant din rebound
From his adamantine sphere,
Filling the ample dome around.
He struck the clanging lyre so loud,
Fancy beheld the hovering cloud
Of ghosts, from Hades' dreary bound,
Rallying to the potent sound;
And it seem'd, from the field, when the contest was o'er,
That the shout of destruction was rising once more;
As if the fall'n warriors had broken the chain
Of Fate, and in terrible tourney again,
Were routing the vanquish'd, and slaying the slain.

* Mr. Campbell, author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, *Verses on the Battle of Hohenlinden* (which are here particularly alluded to) and other admirable poems.

† The God of War in the Scandinavian Mythology.

‡ Heimdall, the faithful porter of Odin's palace.

Loud the power of Combat cry'd,
(Loud the trophied hall reply'd)
" Such are the charms my Britons feel ;
They brace their limbs with nerves of steel.
Heavenly gift! its flame renews
The soul, and elevates her views,
When Freedom joins her sacred spell
To bid the manly bosom swell.
Where spirits, such as ADELINE*
And LINDON's Bard their powers combine ;
There the heavenly pledge is found,
That never in that holy ground
Shall the water-wafted foe
A lasting trophy raise, or joy of conquest know.

* See some poems of uncommon merit with this signature, in the Poetical Register for 1801-2-3, there are others still superior yet unpublished.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD VISCOUNT CHARLEVILLE.*

OF THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND.

ON THE

BIRTH OF A SON AND HEIR,

APRIL 23, 1801.

First published in the Gentleman's Magazine.

The Muse, from southern climes afar,
Where Phœbus mounts the north at noon,
From Araucanian cries of war,†
And ambuscades beneath the moon;
Where Chili's sons with Spain contend,
With joy returns to hail her Friend.

To different strains the breath of May
Awakes her native wood-notes wild,
When Joy and Friendship hail the day
That first beheld the favour'd child:
And sweeter scents in every vale
Seem to perfume the vernal gale.

*His tribute from an hundred hills
The jocund river pours along,
And, winding down, the concert fills
With deeper harmony of song;

* These verses by accident were not inserted in their proper place.

† The author was at this time employed in translating the Araucana of Ercilla and Zuniga.

‡ The river Clodio, that runs through Lord C.'s domain.

The woods that shade his mazy bed
A loftier umbrage o'er him spread.

The light-wing'd clouds, that hover'd long,
Descend at length in welcome rain;
Refresh with hope the languid throng,
And scatter Plenty o'er the plain.
Sweet Flora's gifts Pomona hails,
And Ceres smiles along the vales.

Thus oft to heaven the *poor man's prayer*,
Like grateful incense, wing'd its way,
And seem'd, like clouds in morning air
Dispersing, on the beam of day,
At length his fervent suit was heard,
And new born joy the vallies cheer'd.

A generous and expanded mind,
The BOY from either parent claims;
Pure intellect and taste refin'd,
Exalted thoughts and noble aims;
Such pledges of illustrious birth
Detain Astrea still on earth.

Were they extinguish'd, Fame no more
The triumphs of our isles would tell,
Nor Triton sound, from shore to shore,
His tuneful dirge to those that fell;
When, by your country call'd to arms,
Your spirit blaz'd at wars' alarms.

*When faction rais'd her Hydra head,
And hiss'd along our turbid sky,
Far from your post the demon fled,
And shunn'd, in night, your watchful eye;
We saw her fly, by dread compell'd,
As if Ithuriel's spear you held.

But happy in the arts of peace,
And happier far in general love,
Long may you live in letter'd ease,
And long the tender mind improve,
And wake his lineal worth anew,
By precept and example due.

Not hyacinths nor lilies fair
We boast, his cradle to adorn;
No woodbine blossoms scent the air,
No roses hide the naked thorn;
No Dryad's pendent wreath is here,
Nor Flora paints the varied year.

Yet these were transient, were they found—
—But I will seek the silent vale,
†Where stood the Boy, in awe profound,
Immerst of old, by moonlight pale,

* Lord Charleville being in Dublin at the unexpected commencement of the rebellion in 1793, with a few attendants, and at great hazard, made his way to his residence near Tullamore, through a rebellious country: and, during that perilous season, the tranquillity of the King's county was known to be very much owing to his vigilance and good conduct. Such instances, had they been common, would, in all probability, have prevented much of the bloodshed and desolation which ensued. The author at that time resided in his Lordship's neighbourhood, but soon after removed to a distant part of the country, to which the next stanza but one alludes.

† Alluding to the scene described by the author of the Choice of Hercules, where that celebrated decision was made.

When more than shadowy shapes were seen,
And more than fairies trode the green.

When from the syren's drowsy charm
  His spirit, like a lion, woke,
When at the seraph's loud alarm
  The sensual talisman was broke,
And all the virtues in the rear
Came gliding on the moon-beam clear.

And there, poetic annals say,
  Her ancient footsteps still are seen;
Transplanted from the walks of day;
  There flowers Elysian deck the green,
And scents on midnight breezes sail,
Such as no earthly blooms exhale.

Thence, when the stormy winds are laid,
  And balmy dews from heaven distill,
When no rude passion haunts the shade,
  Or mars the music of the rill,
Oftimes the gifted hand may bring
The treasures of a better spring.

May these around the infant's bed
  By hands aerial oft be sown,
And by their gentle pressure led,
  Oft may he wander, not alone,
To meet the soul-enchanting fair,
Whose lessons broke the deadly snare.

ODE

ON THE MARRIAGE OF THE RIGHT HON.

FRANCIS HASTINGS RAWDON,

EARL OF MOIRA.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES IN SCOTLAND,

WITH THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

FLORA CAMPBELL,

COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.

WRITTEN 1804.

From Holstein to Almada's heights *
The tuneful Maids are mute and still,
Nor Pindus now the Muse invites,
Nor Fiesole's † romantic hill;
Damp fears the general bosom chill,
Whilst Indignation burns to hear
The hireling rhymer deftly trill
His sonnets to a tyrant's ear.

There let him tune with heart forlorn,
And faltering hand, the slavish lyre;
Not thus beneath the brows of Mourne
The Patriot wakes the Poet's fire.
Though meanest of the Muses choir,
The meanest such a theme might warm;
Worth, Honour, Friendship, all conspire,
And Gratitude's ethereal charm.

* In Portugal. † Florence

Hail to the Hymenæal star
That breaks thro' Danger's darkest shade,
Tho' Mars in fury mounts his car,
Beneath Bellona's flag display'd,
Dire signal of the bloody trade;
The dauntless Warrior leads along,
In Glory's van, the plighted maid,
And shews her to th' admiring throng.

O! not for nought the generous tide
Of Bourbon, Hastings, and Navarre, (a)
And the TWIN ROSES summer pride,
Which fortune menac'd oft to mar,
Were mixt by heaven's peculiar care
In thee, and heaven a PLEDGE bestows
(Foretold by many an omen fair)
Of triumph to the BLENDED ROSE.

Hail Caledon! which oft beheld
Thy spearmen by his kindred led, (b)
Invasion fled the trembling field,
When thund'ring down with measur'd tread,
With Bruce and Freedom at their head,
From Scotia's hills they swept the plain,
And native streams, with slaughter fed,
Ran purple to the subject main.

Like meteors from a low-hung cloud,
What spirits light on ARTHUR'S SEAT! *

* A noted hill near Edinburgh.

With WALLACE in his airy shrowd,
The CAMPBELLS and MONTGOMERIES meet,
And DOUGLAS, scorning Gallia's threat;
Then, circling round Edina's towers,
Adown the long-drawn vales they fleet,
To rouse the Caledonian powers.

With softer notes another choir
To spousal warblings tune their lays,
When Beauty fans the Warrior's fire,
And Valour wakes the song of praise,
Twining the myrtle with his bays;
And viewless Minstrels sing the LINE,
Whose growing splendors Hope surveys,
'Till Phœbus' self forgets to shine.

No! while a son of Charlemagne (c)
Survives, by heaven's protecting hand,
The cruel Corsican in vain
Halloos his mercenary band
To slaught'rous deeds, and lines the strand
With crazy hulls that dread the deep;
Britannia's sons the fight demand
On level shore or beacon'd steep.

No trivial cause inspires the flame,
No trivial pledge the realm secures,
Combin'd with Freedom's ancient claim,
Religion's aid our strength assures.

Whether upon the rolling floors
Of England's barques, they mount the tide,
Or discipline her files enures
By land, to check th' Invader's pride.

When mimic royalty, forlorn
Of Heaven and Fortune, disappears
Like yonder cloudy crown of Mourne,
Disperst, by Sol, in pearly tears—
Long as he leads the dance of years,
May manly worth and female grace,
Whatever silver'd Age reveres,
Or Youth admires, exalt your race.

(*a b c*) Lineally descended from the Emperor Charlemaign long before the Imperial title was disgraced, the *Earl of Moira* is consequently allied to the House of Bourbon, and more immediately by his descent from the ancient Kings of Navarre.

It is well known, that the families of Hastings and Bruce were nearly related, and both derived from the royal stem of Scotland. It is almost unnecessary to add, that his Lordship numbers in his pedigree the Houses of York and Lancaster, the white and red rose. See the English and Scots Peerage, &c. &c.

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, D. D.

OF NEWRY, IN IRELAND.

JUNE 1804.

The sound of death is on the blast!
That bell again! oh! let me haste,
Before another piercing wound
Bends me in anguish to the ground,
Before another fatal arrow * flies,
To cut in twain the social ties;
O Campbell! on thy deep lamented hearse
To lay the tributary verse!

Never! ah, never shall I go
With thee to spend a welcome hour,
Of sultry sun or driving snow
Regardless, in thy social bower.
In vain we heard the tempest rage;
The topics of the saint, or sage,
Or classic charm diffus'd within
A sacred influence o'er the scene.
On this rude aerial steep
I now may sit me down and weep,
Or view, thro' tears, yon cloud invested vale,
Where often, on Aurora's gale,

* The author then was apprehensive of a piece of intelligence still more distressing.

I spy'd the curling fume, that mark'd thy dwelling
In a summer morn arise;
Where yon blue hill proudly swelling
Seems to prop the bending skies.
"Oh! thus," I cry'd, "but fed with hallow'd fire,
My Campbell's matin orisons aspire.
THY holy warfare now is o'er,
Go seek the palm on Eden's shore!
O'er thy courage uncontroll'd,
Long the Stygian tempest roll'd.
By godless men and demons' brew'd,
And Licence in her wildest mood.
In heavenly panoply complete,
You heard the dire associates threat;
And 'gainst the fierce-invading crew
The trumpet of defiance blew!
Fenc'd by faith, a solar shield,
Strong the sword of truth to wield:
You kept your post* on yon commanding brow,
And hurl'd the bolts of Zion on the foe.

* The situation of the church of Newry is here alluded to, where Dr. Campbell fulfilled the arduous duties of a pastor for many years, in a manner which will be long remembered with gratitude, and of which the effects we trust will long continue and extend. The limits of a note will not allow us to dwell upon his character. Against faction and infidelity he was a zealous champion at all times, particularly in the late rebellion, and the times preceding. As a defender of the altar and the throne, he sometimes displayed uncommon erudition, enforced by a characteristic manly eloquence. Sometimes he silenced his adversary by a happy stroke of irony, which once had an effect like a torpedo, upon the nerves of a little gentleman (not remarkable for the graces of his person) who endeavoured to persuade the company that our Saviour "was but a man like himself."---"Like you," said the Doctor, "no, that cannot well be in any particular, for it is recorded that *he grew in stature and in grace, and in favour with God and man.*" It ought not to be omitted, that during the late rebellion, where the guilt of any of the prisoners who came within his knowledge was not very atrocious, or any mitigation of the rigour of law could be applied with safety, he always was foremost to interpose, with a recommendation of mercy, where mercy promised a salutary effect.

Yet ardent as your zeal,
Your native kindness flow'd ;
For erring man you knew to feel,
When fate beneath the victor bow'd
The recreant head, and turn'd aside
Ruthless Rancour's deadly tide ;
Th' Impostor's art you foil'd and scorn'd,
Sinners you pity'd and fore-warn'd.
But oh ! when Friendship warm'd thy breast,
Who its energy can tell ?—
Who its holy flame can sing ?
The mournful minstrel sinks opprest,
The slack nerve falters on the string.
Yet ! yet the pressure of thy hand
I feel—I see thy aspect bland ;
'Tis dimm'd by falling tears—Farewell !

TO THE

REVEREND DR. JOHN KEARNEY,

PROVOST OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

Oft the unpractis'd Muse essay'd
The grateful theme, but still delay'd,
Too feeble seem'd her rustic lay,
Her fervent meaning to convey.
But, if she took as bold a flight,
As Pindar's to the source of light;
Still, still that unexpressive glow
Of what she feels, and still must owe,
Would need the more than lyric art
That speaks the language of the heart.

How oft I shar'd the blameless mirth,
That sported round thine ev'ning hearth;
Where Sense and Taste, and genuine Wit,
No motley groupe were seen to sit.
And Friendship still serene,
Hover'd o'er the scene;
*Or in thy look with gentle ray,
Show'd her mild charms in full display.
Yet still I call to mind that piercing glance,
Which often thro' the deep disclosing gloom
Saw the long train of future things advance,
And trac'd the awful scenes of years to come.

* Many instances of this uncommon sagacity the author remembers, when the result of measures, sometimes deemed highly popular, were distinctly foretold.

Now many a league of land and main,
Remote from thee, in shadowy train,
Past times revive in Alma's bowers,
When first you rous'd my slumbring powers ;
Led me the Tuscan string to sound,
Display'd the laurel wreath that crown'd
The mighty Florentine, whose name
More worlds than one consigns to fame ;
And op'd the formidable road*
Where English foot had never trode.
The Muse you lov'd, her GIFTS YOU SHAR'D,
And well could claim her great reward ;
But laid the lyre aside, to wield
Those arms that guard the moral field :
†For nobler tasks were yours, by heaven assign'd
To watch, with anxious eye, the brood of night ;
Whose machinations lur'd the youthful mind,
From Truth and Virtue, with illusive light.
Oft they came on, and oft were turn'd to flight
By sceptic Rage and wild Sedition led,
And hot misgovern'd Zeal, a fiery sprite,
That o'er the scene his flaming ensigns spread,
Yet all in turn were foil'd, and all ignobly fled.
You saw the serpent's flaming eyes,
Where coil'd in Alma's cell he lay ;
And from the warrior of the skies,
That buckler seiz'd, that held at bay

* The author was first encouraged by the Provost to undertake the translation of Dante.

† The care of the provost, to prevent the dangerous effect of several political and religious opinions, both previous to the rebellion of Ireland and since that period, are well known.

The fiend, till with a point of light
Transfixt, he sought the realms of night.

As he that opes a scanty vein,
And spies, with raptur'd gaze,
New treasures dart their mingled rays
Athwart the central gloom ;
And her deep cavities illume
Through all the vast domain :
So by your country's love enflam'd,
That mighty charge your genius claim'd
Her buried talents to explore,
And ope the mental mine once more.
And while from many a bar'brous strand,
O'er the western billows borne,
Or seas that first reflect the morn,
Toiling Trade's laborious band
Waft her wealth on every breeze,
The source of soft luxurious ease ;
The pledge of joy, the cause of strife,
The comfort and the bane of life.
Against the tide of ages as they roll,
Impell'd by other gales, your course you steer,
To bring the scatter'd treasures of the soul,
And with their stores enrich the northern year.
*Fair Eloquence, to low ignoble claims
Devoted oft, to Zion's courts you bring ;
Lesson'd by thee, a nobler task she claims,
And bathes her lips in Siloam's purer spring.

* Various premiums have been instituted by the Provost for composition, elocution, &c. His attention to sacred subjects, and the means of giving them due effect, has peculiarly distinguished the years of his superintendance over the University.

May Alma's sons thy labour share,
And Precept and Example try
To break the foul Circæan snare,
And bid the routed demons fly.
While many a sage and many a gifted Bard
Rang'd in bright order round, at thy behest;
The sacred fane of public virtue guard,
And at its entrance hail the blooming guest.
Their presence wakes those energies that rest
In youthful hearts, as heaven's reflected light
From LEARNING's mirror, fires the generous breast;
And Sloth and Ignorance in dusky flight,
Their rescu'd prey forego, and seek the realms of night.

London, June 21, 1805.

TO

THE REVEREND JOHN SMYTH,

ROSE PLACE, LIVERPOOL.

WITH THE FOREGOING POEMS.

The First Verses allude to the Scenery described in the First Part of the Tale of the KNIGHT OF FELTRIM.

SMYTH! in the mirror of thy mind I view,
By Fancy's magic drawn, the solemn shade,
Where on swift wing the social moments flew,
When thou and Friendship charm'd the summer glade.

How often on the green hill's side we sate,
List'ning afar to Clodio's sounding fall!
Or pacing down the winding, woody strait,
Met the cool air in PAN's umbrageous hall!

O stainless was the mirror of thy mind,
The forms of Vice and Folly past away,
Nor left a taint; while, brighten'd and combin'd,
Virtues ethereal hues were seen to stay.

Nor have revolving seasons borne away,
One trace that there the hand of heaven design'd;
The mellow tints return the heavenly ray,
By pure Religion heighten'd and refin'd.

Often you urg'd me, as at ease we lay,
And caught thro' waving shades the fairy views,
By fits illumin'd by the setting ray,
To give these scenes the tribute of the Muse.

"Did never minstrel here," you often said,
At Love or Pity's call, his pipe essay?
Did no heroic deed renown the glade,
No generous claimant wake the poet's lay?

"E'en Spenser here, perhaps, of old has view'd,
Day-dreams of glorious deeds, that Fancy flung
Across his woodland range, for yonder flood
And yon majestic cliffs the poet sung.*

"And yon retiring uplands still display
The ruins, where the frowning fort arose,
Built by the poet's plan to keep at bay
The formidable rage of England's foes.

"Does Inspiration here no longer breathe,
Her fairy summons in the waving boughs?
O haste my friend to claim a sylvan wreath,
Perhaps the gentle Muse may hear thy vows."

* The neighbouring mountain of Sleive Bloom, and the river Barrow, that rises near it, are both celebrated by Spenser, and by his direction a fort or castle was built on a commanding situation near the place mentioned here, called the Brackenagh, now Castle Brack, between Tullamore and Mount melick.

To thee I owe, that with presumptuous hand,
I try'd the chords in that sequester'd vale,
Where noble Feltrim met the ruffian band,
And the pale Dryads heard the WOODMAN'S TALE.*

Those shades you left, and that romantic hill,
To nobler toils by heavenly guidance led;
There many a summer eve I wander'd still,
And with poetic dreams my fancy fed.

But oh! how mean a task, compar'd with thine,
When, with the lamp of heaven, you found your way
To those, condemn'd in hopeless gloom to pine,†
Without the grateful change of night or day!

But spirits no material aid require,
They reach their kindred souls on viewless plume;
You bade celestial Hope their minds inspire,
And shed new transport thro' the cheerless gloom.

I saw the living flame diverge, and run
Like heaven's own lightning thro' the dusky band,
When with a beam, unborrow'd from the sun,
You bade their slumb'ring energies expand.

I heard them, like the symphonies above,
When Raphael breathes the sweet, prelusive strain;
In loud alternate songs of faith and love
Proclaim the glories of Emmanuel's reign.

* Alluding to the story of the Knight of Feltrim, and the Woodman's Tale. See the preceding part of this volume.

† The Institution, at Liverpool, for the support and instruction of the *Blind*, to which Mr. Smyth has paid particular attention

I heard them sing the kind, creating hand
That planted eyes within, whose piercing ray
Beheld Elysian prospects wide expand,
On the bright noon of everlasting day.

Go on, my friend!* Oh may you never hear
Bellona's clangour mix its baleful tones
With those fine strains that pierce the mundane sphere,
And call down cherubs from their splendid thrones.

Go on, my friend! the gentle hand of Time,
At length, this envious shadow will remove;
Then will your pupils, in another clime,
Return the raptur'd glance of joy and love.

* The author is fully sensible of the merit of *all* those gentlemen who founded and support the noble institution in Liverpool for the relief and instruction of the blind; nor does he mean in the least to derogate from that well-earned praise to which they are entitled from every feeling heart; but having been witness of the uncommon pains taken by his friend in the instruction of the objects of this charity, and the uncommon improvement made by them in religious knowledge, he was glad of the opportunity of paying him this little tribute.

ON READING

THE POEM OF MADOC,

BY MR. SOUTHEY.

Cambria! that strain was of another note
Than ever down Pendragon's vales of yore
From Mathraval, or Devas wizard shore,
On the soft wing of zephyr us'd to float.
A blessed beam, from no material source,
The bard has seen—it leads him o'er the main;
That spirit* sends it, whom the savage train
(Oft the sad victims of imperious force)
For his mild virtues lov'd. The horned flood
Of old Missouri murmurs deep applause,
And Oroonoko longs for time to bring
Such freights as these—while o'er the palmy wood,
And from the gory stream, for Zion's laws,
Incessant prayers their way to æther wing.

* William Penn, the founder of the colony of Pennsylvania.

ON THE DEATH

OF

THE REV. DR. LESLIE.*

FEB. 16, 1803.

First published in the Poetical Register for 1803.

Accidentally misplaced.

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†LITTLE I thought, when, on the morn that shone
First of the year, I gave the figur'd page
Which marks the limits of each solar stage,
And the short journies of the changeful moon,
That heaven's ETERNAL YEAR would soon be thine;
And that those eyes, which, with benignant ray,
Beam'd on my parting, soon in purer day
Should ope to beatific lights divine.
But thou wert ripe for bliss; the num'rous train
Whom thy long labours for the realms of light
Gradual prepar'd, with many a choral song
Hail thee, ascending to the blest domain,
Or lead thee onward through the orders bright,
Where the good shepherds round their MASTER throng.

* Of Tandragee, in Ireland. See the Monody on that subject.

† The author, on a visit to Dr. Leslie, on New-year Day, had presented him with an Almanack.

THE

ROYAL MESSAGE,

A DRAMATIC POEM.

PERSONS.

David.
Absalom.
Achitophel.
Hushai.
Benaiah.
Joab.
Uriah.
Adriel.
Eliezer.
Jonadab.
Shimei.
Abdon.
Oniah.
Queen.
Tirzah.
Bathsheba.

Scene—Jerusalem.

THE

ROYAL MESSAGE.

ACT I.

Scene—A Street in Jerusalem—A mournful procession seen at a distance.

BENAIAH AND HUSHAI MEETING.

Ben. WELCOME from Rabbah's camp!—your stay was short—
I trust your mission prosper'd?
Hush. Friend—all hail!
The success of my mission lies in clouds
Till time shall draw aside the mystic veil:
But, say, what means this solemn pomp? It seems
Attended by half Judah! some disaster
Has blank'd the face of Salem; do they bend
Their march to Israel's holy shrine, to seek
For aid or counsel?

Ben. Nought of holy import
Conducts the pomp, but sacrilege and guilt,
To *one* indeed confin'd: the crowd are free,
Tho' touch'd with honest and indignant grief
To find so foul a taint infect their name.
Hush. Is it such guilt as justice cannot reach?
Ben. It can!
Hush. What hinders then the needful stroke
That lops the foul infected limb away?
Ben. Now they come near!—say, canst thou recognize
That reverend form that leads the mourning train?
Hush. Can I believe my sight! 'Tis Nathan's self,
The holy man! Heavens!—how serene he looks
Amid the general woe!
Ben. Yet in his looks
Seest thou what kindling indignation gleams
At times; and how his rapid eye-beam darts
Into futurity, and what a glance
Of anger mixt with sorrow oft he throws?
Hush. What can it mean
In such a saintly bosom, long estrang'd
From human passions, such disorder'd starts,
Such flaws, as seem to shake his aged frame,
Such agony, such heart-felt grief, as paints
His visage, seem of some mysterious themes
With more than human organ to discourse!
Ben. You saw him calm, but now—he sooth'd the crow'd
In the most dreadful hurricane of rage
That ever threaten'd change.

Hush. What mov'd their wrath?

Ben. The strange and frontless guilt
Of Nathan's son, to whom th' indulgent sire
Had given his ALL, and that inhuman wretch
(Spite of his double sanctity, compos'd
Of prophet and of father) forc'd him thence
(With insult, next to outrage) in the eye
Of noon and Judah's sons, assembled round,
Who gaz'd with horror on this impious deed.

Hush. Why, all things seem revers'd—how bore the crowd
Th' abominable fact?

Ben. Their fury swell'd,
And seem'd beyond the power of aught but Heaven
To sooth—when, with authoritative tone
That seem'd to palsy every lifted hand
And quench the fire in every sparkling eye
The sire commanded, and they spar'd the son—
"Go! take my farewel to the king" he said,
(To a young friend, that stood dejected by)
"And tell him what you saw," then past along
Self-sentenc'd, self-exil'd. The mourning crowd
That for a benediction press around
Have thus delay'd his exit.

Procession passes by—some Israelites remain behind.

Hush. This vile son
Had never dar'd this outrage, but he knew
The king's aversion to his reverend sire!

Ben. In days of old, a prophet's mystic deeds

Were often (like the nightly waving sign
That leads the vaward of the coming storm)
An awful harbinger of Heavenly wrath
That figur'd forth disastrous days to come:
Their actions speak when words are found to fail,
Thus may it be once more!
To any ears but thine I should not trust
My thoughts, but this late coldness in the king
To his best friends in general, makes his hate
To Nathan less prodigious. How he sinks
From the fraternity of angels, down
To mingle with the common mass of men!—
Oh what a change! since with yon reverend sage
He us'd to mount beneath the morning star
To Olivet's calm brow, like Amram's heir
There half the journey of the summer sun
Beneath her hallow'd bowers abstracted sate
With the rapt prophet, and, with kindling eye
And attitude of wonder, catch afar
The strong delineations of that hand
Which trac'd the pageants of the times unborn,
Thick rising to Imagination's glance
Like atoms in the sun's unfolding beam!
Oft would they traverse all the sacred hill,
As if that lofty range, in time to come,
Were meant the scene of some heroic deed,
Or second revelation of the law
Of Heaven, like Horeb's summit: but since then,
Late, in the gleam of twilight, mute and sad,

The prophet of the alienated king
Has oft been seen to wander there alone;
There oft he seem'd in fixt and leaden pause
To muse awhile, then, on a sudden, rapt
With strong emotion and irregular glance,
He scann'd the green lawns and the shady bowers,
As if they all seem'd conscious of the change—
The very dregs of Israel feel the change,
And like foul vapours by the sun exhal'd,
They mount in mutinous revolt, and hide
The orb of majesty in dim eclipse.
They feel the weight of glory, and bow down
By trophies and by taxes doubly prest.
Our anarchy at home and fame abroad
Are like the spasms of an expiring man,
Who seems to grapple with a nerve of steel
Tho' Death's cold siege his lab'ring heart assails.

[*Shout.*

Hush. Now, like the fiery fever's rising rage,
The people's fury threat the public weal
With wild delirium and misrule. Behold
How the wide tumult fluctuates! now they shout
As if some demon, in the seemly mask
Of popularity had fir'd their souls.

Ben. You guess aright—it is that artful fiend
That, in the shape of Absalom, purloins
The people's loyalty, and, in its stead,
With unfelt skill infuses in their veins

Sedition's deadly bane.—Let us retire
And mark the demagogue's perfidious art.
[*Retire to one side.*

SCENE II.

ABSALOM—ISRAELITES.

Abs. It must not be, my friends! my loyalty
So combats with my feelings for your woes,
That I must fly the strong seducing charm,
Or deviate from the strict and narrow path
That filial duty points! The royal wrath
Already burns, because I dar'd to ask
Some relaxation of your bonds: alas!
My voice is discord in my father's ear,
It sounds a raven's note: some other strain
More tuneable may reach the regal sense,
And touch the nerve of pity. They, whose spells
Build up the high, invisible mound, that bars
All access from the people to their King,
Can seal his eyes, when the inhuman son
Expells his father, and let Piety
Be chas'd with scorn from Salem's sacred streets.
Yet should I lift my voice at Israel's wrong,
How would they conjure up the deadly forms
Of foul revolt, and charge me with the crime
Of most unnatural treason? Let this plead

Your friend's excuse, who must in silence mourn,
But dare not vent his grief in aught but tears:
Farewel my friends! be patient, and resign'd.
[*Exeunt severally* Absalom *and* Israelites.

MANENT HUSHAI AND BENAIAH.

Ben. Such is the oil that subtle Arlist pours
Upon the flame, and bids it blaze the more;
His secret machinations cannot still
Be hid, as now; the conflagration soon
(I fear) will blaze his practice to the world,
And show the danger, when beyond a cure.
Hush. O for a man to cross the deadly spell!
A friend to King and people both at once,
Whose worth might add a dignity, and give
His words due aim and weight to reach the ear
Of monarchs with effect, and touch the soul!
Not like those random and uncertain shafts
Of declamation, wing'd by every wind,
That fluttering fly, and fall without a scope.—
Ben. Unless the mandate be already given
To the destroying angel not to spare,
I know the man could stand within the breach,
Could stop th' invading pest, and teach the King
To ward the danger off, a man belov'd
By Israel, and his monarch's chosen friend!
Hush. Name him!
Ben. Your eyes were witness to his worth
Not many days ago!

Hush. Uriah!

Ben. He,

Or none, could heal the growing malady
Which else might turn a gangrene!

Hush. Hope suggests
That the late message of the King portends
Immediate exaltation, and high trust
To him—some powerful reasons could be given.

Ben. True—friend!—and so I thought, when I perceiv'd
No common messenger employ'd, but one
Whose searching eye thro' courts and camps pervades,
And like a sun-beam spies the latent ill.

Hush. To me such courtly language—from a friend—

Ben. Pardon me—but I guess'd (tho' little skill'd
Or studious in the mystic things of state
To pry) that, not alone to call the friend
Of David, you were sent, but to explore
Whether, with fervent zeal, or lukewarm love
In Israel's camp the General's name is breath'd.

Hush. You know the humours of a camp, my friend!
How liberal of reproach against their chief
E'en him that all would bleed for—but in Joab
I fear that jealous and malignant spirit
Still lives, that cost the friend of Saul so * dear.

Ben. What reason have you to suspect so deep?

Hush. The mandate of his monarch he receiv'd
With martial dignity, but, when he learn'd

* Abner, assassinated by Joab. See 2 Sam. c. iii. v. 20. 27.

The message for Uriah, o'er his cheek
Past, in a twinkling, all the varying hues
Of close conflicting passion, till his art
Seren'd the ruffling storm; that night I stay'd,
Next morn I sought the General! but I found
Admittance was deny'd.

Ben. To David's envoy?—
This was a strain of insolence indeed!

Hush. This sturdy opposition will be found,
Perhaps, the child of fear, a conscience gall'd
With guilt, for if to rumour we may trust,
Under the shadow of a moonless night
This great commander, like a felon, stole
From his pavillion, and the trenches past.—

Ben. What proof of this, besides malignant fame?

Hush. His brother's doubled vigilance and care,
His trumpet singly call'd the host to arms,
The absent General's part he well sustain'd,
From wing to wing he travers'd all the host
And kindled up the slumb'ring war anew.

Ben. Nor yet appear'd the chief? and was it fear
Or sullen indignation that withheld
The general?

Hush. Time his purpose may disclose;
Meanwhile, conjecture dogs his lonely steps
Over the burning waste to Tadmor's bounds,
Where those, whom late his lifted vengeance spar'd
On the dry skirts of Midian, wait the sign
To leave those wilds, where parching thirst abides

And settle on Samaria's water'd vales
Like locusts.—Others think his course is turn'd
Among the tribes of Israel, to foment
Revolt and war.

Ben. To me this enterprise
Seems foreign to his bent: is he a man
On bare suspicion to forsake his post?
Would he the rebels' daring flag unfurl,
And fling his fortune in the dubious scale
Of wild domestic rage, because her lord
Sent for a faithful servant from the camp?
It bears no semblance of his ancient art.
He would not plunge himself in Jordan's flood
Because, he thought, he heard a lion roar?

Hush. Yes—he will plunge,—but like a water snake
Close vigilance must watch the passing stream,
For none can tell to what unhappy shore
The monster first will point his crested head.
—All yet is dubious but his flight!

Ben. And we,
Shall we conceal those tidings from the King?
'Tis fit he knew the danger's full extent!

Hush. Far, far beyond the limits of the camp
(If I conjecture right) the danger spreads,
And much more near than Tadmor's burning sands,
Or e'en than Jordan's bounds!

Ben. Too true: alas!
The democratic spirit spreads abroad;
Like a proud overpeering flood it sweeps,

And levels all distinction, scorns all rule,
As if the waves should lift their foamy heads
To dash their Empress from her throne of light
Whose silver wand their mighty motion sways,
Uriah's popularity and skill
Might fix the helm of empire in his hand,
And bid the menac'd bark out-ride the storm.

Hush. Or, to surprise him with unwonted honours,
Or profit by his counsel, David brings
At such a time, the soldier* from his post.—
But it were well if some experienc'd friend
Would meet the warrior, ere he sees the King,
And hint some useful topics for the times,
Such as the smooth-tongued courtier dreads to use.
But which a soldier's candour might enforce,
And amplify with fearless eloquence.

Ben. Is he arriv'd?

Hush. A few short hours will see
The warrior here.

Ben. These moments must be us'd
To counsel your brave friend, how best to serve
His country and his King.—I go to find
That friend who in his inmost bosom lives,
Who best can fire his zeal, or 'suage his flame.

[*Ex. severally.*

* Viz. Uriah

SCENE III.

An Apartment in the Palace of the Queen.

THE QUEEN,* TIRZAH.

Tirz. O Princess! yet reflect! a husband's love
By arts like those was never yet regain'd.
Vengeance may quench the flame, if any spark
Should yet survive, but ne'er can wake the fire
In such a heart as his—recal thy words,
And bid thy messenger return! this hour,
Perhaps this moment, sees the spell begun
That calls the fiends of discord from the deep,
And poisons home-bred joy.

Queen. Were I a slave,
Call'd by th' inconstant smile of royalty
For a few April days of transient love
Like a fond flower to bask beneath the beam,
Then hang my patient head, surcharg'd with dew,
And patient weep the sun's departing ray,
Thy lessons might have weight! But I was born
Of one, whose voice, by him that lords it now,
Was dreaded worse than thunder! when thou seest
An eagle's aiery breed the patient dove
Then preach forbearance! when thou seest the drops
Of autumn wash away yon lofty frame
That lifts its brow to Heaven, expect my tears

* Michal, the daughter of Saul.

Will melt a stubborn heart!

Tirz. Nor prayers nor tears
Would I advise, but patience, and the calm
Of resignation, unassuming worth,
Virtues, that speak by action, and confess
That more than mortal guest that dwells within,
That soul-subduing grace, whose cherub smiles
Can reach the heart, and bid revolting love
Obsequious, own your sway,—forgive my zeal
If my too liberal tongue offend! but late
You thought more calmly, and confess'd these arts
Were not below your care, by arts like these
(So well conceal'd, they seem'd no longer art)
Not many moons ago you thought you saw
His love returning.

Queen. This augments my grief,
That then, from bloody wars but new return'd,
When calm reflection brooded o'er the past,
And brought again forgotten times to view,
My faithfulness and zeal, when for his life
(Threaten'd by angry Saul, who sent his slaves
With bloody purpose) * I expos'd my own,
Sav'd him from slaughter, and a crown bestow'd.
This he remember'd, and methought I saw
The tender lover o'er the king prevail,
And halcyon days return! when, like a blast,
That withers all the genial blooms of spring,
This syren came, a suppliant, as it seem'd,
Drest for persuasion, tho' in weeds of woe.
In all the winning eloquence of tears

* 1 Sam. c. xii. v. 12.

Adorn'd. And with a pious charge, to gain
A brother's pardon. So the rumour past,
But all was fraudful practice, all design'd
To ruin my projected schemes, and lay
My tow'ring edifice of hope in dust.
I will not bear it. By the awful name
Of him, whose blood I share, his ghost shall see
Ample revenge for his insulted line!

Tirz. Oh yet reflect! you draw a scene of guilt
With Rumour's pencil, from imagin'd wrong!—
Must Israel's sacred monarch be aspers'd,
Because Uriah left his blooming bride,
And, to th' inviting couch of love, preferr'd
The warrior's lonely bed. He might have stay'd—
No voice imperial call'd him to the field,
Till the revolving moons had brought again
His nuptial day.* His fellow bridegrooms all
Pleaded the law, nor for the martial trump
Would change the hymeneal lyre. But he
Disdain'd the flowery chaplet, and put on,
With pride, the warrior's plume. His spouse's prayers,
Her adjurations, and her trickling tears,
That heighten'd every charm, unmov'd he bore,
When honour call'd. And must we then conclude
That fixt aversion in her bosom grew,
Because her lord preferr'd his country's call
Before ignoble ease? Such merit claim'd
Increase of love. And must Bathsheba stray

* New married men were excused from military service for the first year, by the Mosaical law.

Down that alluring path where pleasure leads,
Because Uriah chose the rigid path
Where Honour marshalls on her hermit train?
—Not such effects from such examples flow!—

Queen. The blessed sun that bids the flower expand,
Matures the poisonous weed. And scorn with scorn,
And hate with hate the female heart repays
Oft'ner than tame servility, inspir'd
By contumelious negligence and pride.
Would heaven I could forget—but thy defence
Brings to my mind the hateful circumstance
Of their first meeting. * Then how David's heart
Glow'd at her opening beauties, when he sought
Her father's house, a refuge from the rage
Of his pursuers! Hope inspir'd his vows—
But when he learn'd Eliam's † solemn vow
Had given her to Uriah, he resign'd
His love to friendship: with dissembled virtue
He gave her—but to make her more his own!

Tirz. Thus still suspicion clouds the noblest deeds,
With her Tartarean shades! Let Reason speak,
Reason will tell, that if she scorn'd her spouse,
Who sought, at Honour's call, the bloody field,
She too must scorn that lover, who resign'd,
At Friendship's voice, her blooming virgin charms.—
Reason will tell, that he, whose strenuous hand

* At that time David had been deprived of his spouse by Saul.
† Father to Bathsheba.

Could shut the pleasing image from his heart,
At Friendship's call, would never wound the peace
Of one, for whom he sacrificed his feelings!—
O then, my sovereign, hear thy servant's plea,
Recall your mandate! trust not vague report,
Nor be it ever said that she, who draws
Her blood from Israel's first and mightiest king,
Should seek the level of the slave, and mine
Domestic peace! 'Tis nobler far to look
Above such injuries! and leave to time
To cure such casual wand'rings of the heart
If he have stray'd!

Queen. Thinkst thou I would proceed such dreadful lengths,
Without the clearest proof?
Were it but casual, there indeed were hopes
Of speedy reformation. But I fear,
I fear! nay, I am certain. Years on years
Have seen their passion grow! it ne'er can be,
It gives the lie to reason, that a glance,
A casual look, tho' arm'd by Heaven or Hell,
With all their enginry, should fire the heart
At once. Of spells and magic I have heard,
But not believed. And there are men whose hearts
Yield at first onset. But, 'mongst such, the name
Of David numbers not.

Thir. There must be charms
Of mind, as well as person, to secure
Lasting esteem; unhappy is that fair,
Who, trusting to th' enchantment of the eyes

Alone for conquest, when th' artillery fails,
Has no supply of mental charms within.
Hers is a short dominion!

Queen. To her charms
The fair adult'ress trusts not! There are powers
Whose strong assemblage keeps her in the throne
Of royal favour. And, should she be cast
Aside, the busy panders soon would find
Another in her room! By *her*, they rule;
She is their instrument to wind at will
This royal engine to their sordid ends.
And, does it not become my birth, my place,
To scatter that obnoxious cloud, that damps
The royal virtues? Long the sacred lamp
Of Judah has burn'd dim beneath the gloom,
But soon it shall revive, and justice reach
The trembling victim, tho' behind the throne.
A loyal few, who lov'd my father's name
(Trusty and bold, all friends of antique stamp,
Who mourn my degradation, feel the fall
Of her, that added lustre to the name
Of Bethlehem's haughty lord,) shall aid my views.
To David's counsels they shall find their way,
And force attention to the people's prayers.
The house of Saul again shall lift its head
In ancient splendour, on the blasted hopes
Of those, who scoff her faded fortunes now.—
But, see! my faithful messenger returns;
His cheerful looks proclaim the deed is done,

And I shall rest in peace! But thou retire.
His message needs no witness.

Tirz. Heaven forefend
Those evils, which my sad presaging soul
Sees in approach, perhaps before the sun
Descends; for counsel now is all in vain.

[*Exit* Tirzah.

SCENE IV.

THE QUEEN—SHIMEI.

Queen. Thy countenance declares, before thy speech,
The success of thy message.

Shim. Yes, my queen!
The deadly vapours of illicit love
Have reign'd too long. But soon the wholesome gale
Of great revenge shall lift its awful voice,
And sweep from yon polluted palace walls
The noxious brood, that long in swarms besieg'd
Each avenue, and banish'd from its bounds
The sons of modest merit, ancient worth,
And lineal honour! Soon that upstart race,
With that perfidious, bloody man, who slew
Thy father's friend, shall lower their haughty crests

Queen. Follow me to my chamber—there disclose
Thy tidings at full leisure, the loose tribe
Of profligates and panders soon shall find

Their empire at an end—convene your friends,
But one by one, lest over-curious eyes
Should mark their movements.

Shim. I but stay to meet
One of my confidential friends, who waits
My coming at this instant, and the next
Shall see me, with the rest, attend thy will.

[*Exit* Queen.

Shim.—*(Alone.)*—O sacred house of Benjamin! again
Thou shalt resume the sceptre, or at least
Its lineal honours share.—Alas! with them
The old renown of Jacob sinks in night:
Our glory is departed! Freedom fell
With thee, or what of freedom still remain'd
And bloody conquest now, and martial law,
And costly pomp, by parasites ador'd,
Succeed the rustic majesty of Saul,
Who mingled with the people, nor disdain'd
To lead their legions, or in peace partake
Their humble joys—but see! my trusty friend
Approaches to my wish—Abdon—all hail!

SHIMEI—ABDON.

Shim. The moment comes, when they, who shed the blood
Of Abner, thy lamented friend, shall pay
The fine of festal treason, and prepare
A banquet of revenge, that fiends might smile
To view!

Uriah comes, and in himself an host:
Arm'd with his wrongs, he soon shall shake the walls
Of parasitic power! the kindred hosts
Of Ammon and of Tadmor thro' the tribes
That line yon courts, would scatter less dismay
If our designs succeed!

Abd. Too well I know
Uriah's spirit—still untractable
And stern, he moulds his manners on the code
Of our republic: and her name adores
With true devotion: our neglected laws
He so reveres, that neither power nor wealth
(Tho' next to regal honours on his brow
Were plac'd with liberal hand) could bend his soul
To smother his revenge, or let his wrath
Be satisfied with gentler penalty
Than what the law requires.

Shim. And that is death
With propagated shame!

Abd. And wouldst thou wish
That shame should reach to David? could'st thou bear
To find the name of that heaven-favour'd man
Tainted with scandal's vile ignoble blot,
An imputation, made by factious hands,
Perhaps the fuel of the people's rage?—

Shim.—*(Aside)*—Then is it as I fear'd—this interview
Was timely—but I must dissemble now,
And wear the mask of loyalty!

To Abd. My soul

Is seiz'd with horror at the thought?—But still
Some moderate method may be found, to steer
Between the wild extremes; the Sanhedrim
And popular delegates at Salem now
Conven'd thy art may sound—they all revere
The patriot's name, and hate the haughty man
Who leads our armies—and, for selfish ends,
Fires, with incessant schemes of foreign wars,
The royal mind, that he may hold the sword.
His is the power—the *shadow* here remains
Behind at Salem—should the general vote
Prefer Uriah, (ere the husband knows
His bed's abuse) his wrongs perhaps might rest
In long oblivion. Bathsheba's return
To welcome home her warrior, with the spell
Of loyalty and wedded love at once,
Might lull the whirlwind to a lasting calm.

Abd. Be it my business then to sound the tribes;
Perhaps the monarch, struck with deep remorse,
Nor less by merit won (by chance, or heaven
Combin'd, at this fair crisis) may consent
To crown the warrior, tho' he wrong'd the man,
And all at last be amity and peace. [*Exit* Abdon.

Shim. Go! loyal fool! and, like the sightless mole,
Mine for me! while the rude materials rais'd
By thy blind industry, shall raise a pile
Of finer masonry, exalted far
Above the present fabric, which thy love
So idolizes! this Jessean stem,

If Fate's mysterious volume right I read,
Shall know no second spring! He little dreams
I hate Uriah too! vain-glorious man!
He scorns the courtier, prizes honesty,
And looks contemptuous on the lazy herd
That bask at ease, beneath the royal beam
At home, while he sustains the sultry noon,
And reaps an iron harvest—not aware
That, bought and sold, the single-hearted slave
Toils out his weary youth to feed our pride,
But we are grateful—witness he, who walks
Thro' yonder shades in contemplation deep,
Fain would I listen—but his friend is near—
Achitophel, the partner of our hopes—
He will discover all in proper time,
Nor at this crisis would I here be found!

[*Exit* Shimei.

DAVID, (ACHITOPHEL AT A DISTANCE.)

Yet, thanks to Heaven some feelings are alive,
The gangrene has not spread o'er all my soul!
I am not quite embruted, quite debas'd
Below th' inferior orders, whose prone looks
Contemplate earth, for I can view yon sun,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
With looks erect, but not of filial awe.
It flashes terror on me! When it frowns
I feel a night within, Cimmerian gloom,

In double pomp of horror! When it smiles,
The opening scenes of yon proud theatre
Display that ample range, where late my Muse
Wing'd her proud way exulting. Now, alas!
Drooping she sits, with moulted plumes, below,
And scarcely seems to wonder at her fall!
Yet more than all those elements combin'd,
In dread explosion bursting on my head,
I fear the looks of that much injur'd man;
Injur'd beyond repair, beyond the wealth
Of Egypt to repay. I sent for him—
And yet I seem his coming steps to feel,
Weighty as lead upon my sinking heart.
Yet such a chaos domineers within,
That I scarce know the motive of those throbs
That rend my heart-strings. Whether keen remorse,
Or dread of heaven, or that antipathy
That rival feels for rival in his love—
And now he comes,—and in her burning cheek,
And in her alienated eye confus'd,
He soon will see that sacred spark of love
Quite gone, that us'd to welcome his return,
Bath'd in the honest twinkling tear of joy!
This soon he must perceive, or he has lost
That piercing sense for which I lov'd him once—
And must I see him too? I sent for him—
And must I shrink beneath my servant's eye
Debas'd, a crouching slave, before a slave?
It is but justice. He, that fear'd not heaven,

Should tremble at his fellow dust!—The man
Whose coward conscience tells him he has sinn'd,
Flies when no foe pursueth. Time has been
When I was lion-hearted, but, alas!
I then was righteous—I can trace the steps
That led from guilt to guilt, a downward way;
But to revisit light, and mount again,
Appears a task beyond the strength of man;
And who shall raise me from the murky den
Which I myself have dug? Shalt thou?
[*Seeing* Achitophel.
From thee,
And thy pernicious counsels, I derive
The ruin of my peace.

Ach. My sovereign lord,
My faithful counsels—

David. Fed my passions high.
'Twas thou inflam'd my pride, and woke the war
With Ammon,* for a slight affont, a wrong
Which wisdom would have smil'd at. Thou advis'd
To leave the toils and hazard of the war
To Joab, and rest at home, lull'd by the sound
And distant din of arms.* A stripling's scorn
Must be repaid with blood, while sloth at home
Fosters worse passions. Had I brav'd the field,
And cop'd alone with unbelieving foes,
Cas'd in bright arms beneath the beam of noon,
My worst foe had not found me!

* Viz. The treatment of his Ambassadors by Hanun, son to the King of Ammon. 2 Sam. 10.

Ach. Witness Heaven
Witness my honour unimpeach'd! no views
But for thy sacred safety sway'd my voice
To counsel thy delay!

David. O blessed times,
Tho' deem'd afflictive, when, from hill to hill
I fled the royal blood-hounds! *Them* I thought
My only foes, my only trust was Heaven!
His favour to obtain, my vigilance
And caution still, with keen observant eye,
Guarded against the taint of every vice,
I saw but *one* protector, but *one* way
To gain his favour. Every morning shone
On some new miracle. Some wond'rous scene
Of prompt deliverance.

Ach. Let my sovereign lord
Not forfeit his dependance. On despair
Heaven frowns, and hates the soul that doubts his love.

David. His love!—Too much I trusted in his love!
Abus'd his mercy, and his power defy'd,
But now, alas! I dread the eye of man.
My heart is bare and bleeding—every glance
Sends a shaft thro' it—tho' but late it seem'd
Enclos'd in steel. Say, is Uriah come?
And is there hope to veil the glaring shame
From every eye, but Heaven's—for man to man
Is an inhuman judge, and I have foes
That soon would dog my name, and hunt it down
Thro' every maze of endless infamy!

Ach. Uriah is return'd.

David. And wherefore yet
Has he not claim'd an audience? Tho' I dread
To see him, yet his absence wounds me more.
I know not what to wish, or to enquire.
Has he vouchsaf'd a visit yet at home?
Or has allegiance vanquis'd love, and sent
The gallant injur'd warrior first to pay
His duty to his king?

Ach. At your command
His motions all are spy'd.

David. And what result?
Torture me not with doubt; nor, on your life,
Dare to conceal the worst!

Ach. Compell'd, adjur'd,
My loyalty commands, what love would hide.
Ere those you sent had met him on the way,
Who meant, beneath some seeming fair pretext,
To tend his footsteps, till they lodg'd him safe,
Lest any foul report, or dark surmise,
Should taint his eyes, or ears—he was observ'd
In close and serious conference with Shimei.

David Then all is public—that curst Benjamite
(Sworn foe to me and mine) has told the tale,
Whate'er he knew, and what he knew not, feign'd.
Disloyal tardy slaves! whose task it was
To meet him first, and keep his mind serene
From each contagious rumour! all is lost!
Has he yet reach'd his home, or have you learn'd
Of his reception there?

Ach. I had not means.—

David How seem'd he on his coming to the palace?
I know his open nature, far above
Dissembling, or the usual craft of courts;
Whate'er he feels, his feelings he proclaims—
Each look and gesture shews his inmost soul.
Oh! could I read his looks—but mine would show
What most I want to hide!

Ach. He will not brook
(Proud, and a soldier as he is) to tell
Whate'er he knows to all, if aught he knows—

David. If aught he knows!—where'er the serpent's fang
Was fixt, the poison rankles in the wound—
And Shimei's love to me I long have known!—
That Benjamite by ev'ry art has try'd
To taint my purest actions with the stain
Of some malignant view, and put the mask
Of Malice e'en on Innocence—oh then
What horrid vizor's for Deformity?—
It needs none, for the slightest hint of truth
Is foul enough.

Ach. Yet Shimei scarce would dare
To give his venom breath—for, well I know
The coward tongue would faulter in his fears;
He is not one whom noble natures soon
Would condescend to trust!—there is between
His nature and Uriah's such repulse,
Such fierce antipathy, as ne'er would blend
Their jarring natures in one common view
Or common trust.—

David. Go find him, and explore
His spirit, while I study to receive him.
[*Ex. severally.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT. II.

SCENE I.

An open Space before the Palace of David.

URIAH.

Would I had fall'n in battle! all the rage
Of onset, siege, and storm, is balmy peace
To what I feel within!—I thought thee false,
O Shimei! and Bathsheba truth itself.
What baneful art has ruin'd thee and me!—
For thou must fall—if justice yet is left
In Israel, nor will I thy doom survive,
To linger out in shame a hated life,
The mark of public scorn! a man, who prest
Still foremost in the paths of honest fame!
Yes! justice shall be done! for David lives—
David, whose life by these heav'n-favour'd hands
Of old was sav'd.—'Tis he will right my wrongs.

And he will greatly vindicate my fame,
(For that calumnious tale, with mystic art
Hinted by that vile Benjamite, I scorn
To think of it; and would to heaven the rest
Were false alike!)—but I have seen too much—
Her looks, her words confirm'd it!—but an hour
Of calm deliberate scrutiny will come!
To search the maze of deep iniquity—
And then—for vengeance! vengeance!—To the king
My duty first I'll pay, (as he requires)
And paint the glorious progress of his arms!
'Tis needful soon, lest frenzy, or despair,
Should seize my faculties, ere I fulfil
A loyal soldier's and an envoy's due.

To HIM, ADRIEL.

Uri. Welcome my friend! but what dost thou behold
In me, to touch your features with concern
So ill disguis'd, and deep, as what I see
In ev'ry line of that once cheerful face?
Before we met you seem'd to turn away,
And hide a burning blush! Was it for me
You blush'd, my friend? Was it for me that tear
Stole down your glowing cheek? Have I behav'd
Or, as a soldier, or a friend, to bring
Shame on my friends? Uriah knows no guilt,
No soldier's stain, nor will he hang the head
For others' folly. Come, my friend, I know
My wife is false!

Adr. The tongue of calumny,
That oft envenoms virtue, *here*, perhaps,
Has stain'd the stainless!

Uri. Be it so, my friend;
Then I will search the slander to the source,
And be it distant as the springs of Nile,
Or high as Sinai's thund'ring tops, the Power
That spoke his mandates thence, shall see this arm
Assert his sacred law, by Israel heard,
Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Adr. Well resolv'd!

Uri. Ah, were that all, my friend! but much I fear
The foul contagious air of courts has breath'd
Infection through my dwelling; how, or whence
It came, I know not; but the plague has spread!
It has possess'd her blood! Her mantling cheek
And trembling eyes confess'd it; too serene
Was once that heavenly aspect, not to shew
The smallest vapour which disturbs the peace
That dwelt within, for many a tranquil day,
In better times! Now, all is dark and deep,
Tho' dress'd in borrow'd smiles! She scarce had breath
To speak my welcome—cold to my embrace,
I felt not there that throbbing heart that us'd
To beat in unison with mine.

Adr. Perhaps,
The sland'rous tale has reach'd her ears, and she
Is apprehensive that thine ear has drunk
The deadly poison, and thy rage believ'd

The foul, calumnious tale. This thought might wound
The purest bosom, and induce a tinge
On the most innocent cheek, to look like guilt.—
Your visit was but short. Suspend your judgment
Till but to-morrow's dawn arrive. This night
May bring conviction!

Uri. What! this night! this night
Am I to sleep, and will some angel come
To tell me in a dream my spouse is true?
Or must I, lull'd by charms to soft repose,
Perhaps, within a practis'd harlot's lap,
Help out her soft assertion of her truth
With all a husband's fond credulity?
No—by my father's shade! By all the tombs
Of all that line, whose honourable dust
No stain like this has tarnish'd, I will tear
The mantle from this mystery, ere I sleep,
Or never sleep again!

Adr. Say, would'st thou watch
Her door, or lie in ambuscade at home?
This wild demeanour, if she still is pure,
She soon would know; then hate and deadly scorn
Would pay your ill-starr'd pains!

Uri. And must I doubt
For ever? Have I neither friend nor foe
To end my vain suspense at once?

Adr. This night,
If thou regardst my counsel, shun thy house,
And lodge with me.

Uri. I know thou art my friend,
And yet thy softest implication sounds
Like thunder! What sad change, or deadly form
Of danger, lurks at home? Or must I give
My room to others! Say, what blasting power
Of earth or hell shall cross a husband's steps
That goes to visit home.

Adr. Mistake me not.
You torture ev'ry word to guilty meaning,
To images of shame and turpitude,
Which, on the canvass of the passing clouds,
Your sick'ning fancy draws! I meant no guilt,
Or danger, in thy parting or thy stay.

Uri. Long since we have exchang'd our souls! our love
Surpass'd a female's fondness: can I think
You treat me like a froward child! to lull
My sense of honour by a drowsy charm,
To bid me sit down calmly with my wrongs,
And wink at broad detection? Tell me, friend,
Does this become a soldier and a man
Not lowest in esteem?

Adr. To that high point
I wish to raise thee, which thy merit claims,
Where worth like thine will meet its due reward;
Thy country calls thee!—To Uriah's name
The public chorus chants her sweetest praise,
Mixt with indignant murmurs; when it sees
Thy merit sunk beneath its pitch so far,
Subordinate to fawning slaves, whose tongues

By licking up imperial dust, have cleans'd
Their way to wreaths for which they never bled!—

Uri. Where wouldst thou lead me? thro' what mighty breach
Of loyalty and law conduct my steps,
In vanity's broad mirror to behold
My puny shadow, stretch'd to giant size,
And menacing the moon—I am not craz'd,
Nor (though afflicted deep) can yet mistake
The moody madness of a moonstruck brain
For sober reason.—Adriel! I perceive
Your friendly purpose, in my private wounds
To pour the soothing balm of public love—
And lead me gently from the precipice
Where Reason's self grows giddy!—but once more
Why leave my home to-night?—

Adr. Because a prize
Worthy a soldier may this night be won;
A game to save a kingdom! far beyond
The chace of idle rumours! meanwhile, tell,
Does your proud general keep his old esteem
Among his bands? Say, has he learn'd of late
To triumph over hearts, no more content
With humble looks alone?

Uri. Neither time
Nor place accords with such a question now;—
This, of my general ask'd—my ready sword
Had to another's inquisition given
A suitable reply.

Adr. Reply to me
Not as a soldier, but a trusty friend
That knows to whom he speaks, and therefore dares;
No calumny exists in private words
To faithful bosoms trusted.

Uri. True, if nought
Invidious, or detracting, from my words,
Calumnious art, against the great in name
Or office, may derive: that vapour draws
Her poison from the most innoxious flowers
That e'er perfum'd the gale.

Adr. Art thou become
That honest loyal bigot of the camp
That does his duty boldly, and winks hard,
(Whene'er his general bids him face the foe)
And sees no danger?—Hast thou sunk so far
The citizen of Israel in the soldier
As not to see and feel th' enormous load
Our martial honours lay upon our necks?—
How gaudy does the cause of glory seem—
Like meteors, streaming thro' the waste of night!
Like them, it waves sublime, to witch the world
With gaudy draperies; but, like them, portends
The sounding hurricane, that sweeps away,
At once, the ripen'd harvest and the swain.—
'Twas thus you thought, ere war became a trade,
When the bold peasant flung away his goad,
And seiz'd his jav'lin at his country's call—
Then hung his shield aloft, and join'd the plough.

But, now, in endless wars on wars engag'd,
Where veterans, grown beneath their helmets gray,
Forget they have a country, you have learn'd
The dialect in vogue, and spurn the swain
Who groans beneath the burden of your wars,
If his too lib'ral tongue but glance a hint
Against th' imperial politics, that teach
Unbounded conquest, and unbounded sway.

Uri. You wrong me much, my friend! there is no heart
In all Judæa's bands, which throbs more quick
At freedom's call, than mine! or more regrets
The time, when our victorious flag (which now
Hangs like a meteor o'er the troubled east,
Portending ruin) more benignly shone,
Like Phosphor, o'er those native hills, a sign
Of gentle peace to all but Israel's foes—
Invading foes—but now we seek them far
From home, and seem to love the cruel trade
E'en for itself!

Adr. Believe me, friend, there lies
Beneath the splendid pile of trophied arms
A deep abyss of ruin for the state!——
Ambitious views, and overweening thoughts,
Ideal crowns, and sceptres in the grasp,
Already lead our leader; we pursue,
And ask not why, nor whither.

Uri. Such designs
In other minds, at other times, may grow—

But our commander ne'er will bribe his host
Such dangerous lengths.

Adr. Thro' want of power—perhaps
I doubt his self-denial.

Uri. Be th' effect
From this, or from whatever cause deriv'd,
His honours on his loyalty recline,
And *that* reposes singly on the name
Of David.

Adr. You already have return'd,
All unawares, the answer I desired,
And clear'd my doubts, then from *himself* he holds
No claim to general love; has he no arts
Of popularity?

Uri. His arts are vain,
Since his ill-omen'd hand in Abner's blood
Was dy'd, tho' bold in arms, in counsel wise,
Tho' with the semblance of paternal love
He courts his gallant bands, their hearts revolt,
Tho' by their king's command, their hands are his.
His perfidy to Saul's lamented friend
So taint his every deed, his every look,
His words seem fawning, and his liberal gift
The purchase of sedition—that foul deed
Attaints the general, and degrades the man.

Adr. On kingly favour then he rests alone!—
Say, should the rays of royal grace illume
Some hero in eclipse, and point their rays
Full on another head, would Israel's bands
Approve the monarch's choice?

Uri. I question that,—
His* brother still, with honest martial worth
Of half the popular indignation, robs
The generals name, obnoxious tho' it be—
Another choice may sow dissention's rage
Among the troops.

Adr. But Israel's choice at home,
The sanction of the tribes, the senate's voice,
Would, like the word that bids the troubled deep
Compose her tumult, send a sacred calm
Among the hosts of Jacob.

Uri. The intent
Of your discourse I know not—if to soothe
My grief, you miss the means! while thus you gall
My sore impatience—was I sent for home
To vent at large my unavailing sighs
For undeserved shame, or lend my breath
To faction's aims!

Adr. And art thou yet to learn
The general discontent, that spreads around
From tribe to tribe, and what the delegates
Intend, this moment in full counsel met,—
An awful consistory? thou shalt know
Their purpose soon, and you, perhaps, may hear
Uriah's name, the master-note that fills
The awful harmony of popular claims.

Uri. Uriah's name!

Adr. No longer will they bear
Oppression's iron rod, nor brook the sway

* Abishai.

Of those confederates, who have rul'd the state
So long at random; now a single word,
Perhaps, will break the charm!

Uri. And were my name
That of the luckiest rebel, who dissolv'd
The bonds of loyalty, and blew the storm
From mutiny to madness, till the crown,
Purchas'd by blood, adorn'd the villain's brow.
Sooner upon the footstool of the throne
My blood should flow in royalty's defence,
Than this right hand should break the hallow'd bounds
That lets in loud misrule to lord it wide
O'er sacred order and imperial sway.
E'en gratitude, and friendship's ties forbid.—
I love my king, his virtues well I know,
To them I trust in time to break the cloud,
And chase the noxious fogs that hide his beams.

Adr. You wrong my meaning much, if you surmise
I wish to tempt you from your loyalty—
I rather hope that some high office waits
Your coming, either in the court or camp,
To serve thy king, and Israel's state at once;
Some station, whence your eye, like yonder beam,
May pierce corruption's haunts, and bid it die,
And wither up the foul and noxious stems
Of luxury and vice, where'er they spring.
This David owes thee, and I trust he means
The retribution now, for much it taints
His fame, to leave his long-try'd friend obscure,

(Altho' his worth compels a nation's praise)
Like day's bright lamp, which, tho' beneath the deep,
Yet wakes the warbling lark's instinctive song.
Shouldst thou succeed, the choice would soon dispel
All discontent, and lay the rising storm.
If he neglect thee, and continue still
His favour to that dark society
That fill the court and camp, wouldst thou refuse
A hand to help to save a sinking state,
When Israel claims thine aid?

Uri. I see not yet
The pressing need to leave the beaten track
Of loyalty.

Adr. And may it never come!
Yet time, my friend, may soon discover more!
Then, if thy country calls, attend the call,
Nor fear to spread thy pinions to the gale;
Mount to an eagle's pitch, and boldly soar
Against the sun, if fate demands thy rise!
Think on thy wrongs, if any faults be found
Where most thou fear'st. Remember Israel's claim—
And, when I see thee next, be resolute,
Be fearless, as becomes thy country's friend,
Be bold, be cautious, and avoid thy home.

[*Exit* Adriel.

Uri. Was it a demon in a friendly form
That came to tempt me thus!—I yet am firm—
The noxious spell has neither touch'd my head
Nor heart. I feel the seat of reason clear—

What am I then to think, or what resolve?
Think on my wrongs. Why, then, my shame is known.
Yon travel'd sun but propagates the tale
From east to west! Yet I must shun my home!
Or glares the proof abroad? – perhaps—at court.
Or from the court my shame at first began.
For we, that fight the battles of our king,
And bear the vengeance of our God against
Rebellious states, and purge the noxious clime,
Yet know not what pollution breeds at home,
Or what foul vapours taint the stagnant calm
Of high vic'd cities. Some new favourite
Of this new faction, that besiege the throne
Of too indulgent David, has undone
My peace for ever; yet, whoe'er he is,
My friend e'en dreads to name him. Should it be
*Amnon or Absalom, my sovereign lord
Will not, like old lethargic Eli, spare
The criminal, for his exalted rank
Or royalty of blood. Yet why my friend
Should warn me thus to keep aloof. Some spell
Or danger lurks within. I have it! Fiends!
The veil is drawn at last! O stupid, numb'd
To sense! O for a long and quiet sleep!
Unvisited by dreams!
O for the wings of eagles to escape
This odious scene, and the detested truth
That rushes on my sense—pursues my steps
With harpy stings. Madness were ease to this!

* David's two eldest sons.

I then was call'd for home to cloak her shame.
The foul adult'ress! lest the swelling crime
Should force discovery, 'ere the camp allows
A regular return. Oh, Adriel,
Would thou hadst kept the secret! Yet I thank thee—
Thank thee—for frenzy—madness. Yet I'm calm!
I will collect myself! Ah now I know,
Too well I know thy kind assiduous care,
To lure me from the soul-corroding scene
To fairy strains of popular applause!—
Yet I will keep my post—besiege the court
Till day succeeds to night, and night to day.
Well am I us'd to watching, care, and toil,
In Israel's cause; and in my sov'reign's ear,
E'en in his dreams, I'll hollow for revenge;
And, if I fail, I'll find the way to reach
The nearest to the throne, or shake the seat
Of royalty itself with my appeal. [*Exit* Uriah.

Scene changes to an inner Apartment of the Palace.

DAVID.

How all things change, thro' the dark medium seen
Of self-abhorrence, and the gloom of sin!
Yon sun that us'd to lift my mental view
Thro' boundless journies, till his lamp was lost
On the pure limits of eternal day,
Seems but a flickering taper now, that leads

To the licentious bower. Yon quiet groves,
Where, when the day-star, (sunk beneath the deep)
Call'd in his wand'ring glories, when forlorn
The widow'd Evening flung her gaudy robes
Aside, and walk'd the woods in graver state,
Sedate and slow; when each dim alley seem'd
To fluctuate with aerial shapes, that mov'd
Celestial measures to the soothing swell
Of the soft breeze, which, thro' the lofty sweep
Of the green theatre, alternate rose,
Alternate sunk, and varied with soft touch
The waving scenery of the pendent gloom!
How did the movements of my soul accord
With the grave minstrelsy! But now, these woods
Put on the pomp of Hades. Whispering fiends
Mock the sweet woodland echoes, till they seem
To sicken at their breath! They line my walks,
Marshall my lonely steps, and, thro' the air,
Hurl their dark spells that check the mounting thought,
And tame the soaring soul to base pursuits,
Like the sad bird that skims the mantled pool
When humid vapours clog his weary wings.

To HIM, ONIAH.

Why seek this secret place to tell your tale?
Is it too dreadful for all ears but mine?
Be not dismay'd, but give your message breath;
I who have wander'd desarts, by distrust

Attended, and with danger at my heels,
Have not so far forgot my former toils
But I can bravely meet whatever doom
Heaven may intend!

Aside. Oh ill-supported boast!
Guilt has unedg'd my firmest, best resolves,
And stolen the hero's temper from my soul!

Oniah. Pardon, my lord, and, if my tongue offends,
Think it an organ, by the powers above,
Reluctant, in an odious task employ'd!

David. Whate'er it be, with confidence declare
Thy message; I must learn to bear the worst.
What has been, has been, nor can fate recal
The deeds of yesterday, the deep remorse
Of years to come!

Oniah. Whatever is to come,
Heaven tells not. All her oracles are dumb
To thy enquiries.

David. In the people's voice,
Perhaps, it speaks too plain! That awful organ
Is often touch'd by Heaven. Did Zadok give
No answer?

Oniah. What he said, I shall report
Most truly—when I pray'd him to apply
For counsel to th' eternal majesty
That dwells between the cherubim—*I dare not*,
Was his abrupt reply. "I saw last night
"An awful vision sent from him, who lives
"For ever. In the holiest place of all

" Methought I stood, and saw the heavenly lamp
" Burn ominously dim, all mute and sad
" Seem'd the attendant choir, the warbled hymn
" Paus'd on a sudden, and their startled looks
" Were all bent upward, with expectance dread
" Of some descending terror from above
" Clad in empyreal glory; when anon
" Like light'ning it appear'd, and quick was gone,
" And all was desolate and dark, forlorn
" And silent; but the flash forerun the storm
" Soon rose below a tempest of misrule
" And various clamour, like the winds of Heaven
" That lash th' insurgent waves,—the dread result
" To me is all unknown, nor Heaven vouchsafes
" By oracle or Urim to unfold
" His will at large."

David. I only wish'd to know
If by th' expulsion of a man, involv'd
In tenfold guilt, I might, in part, appease
Heaven's anger, which against me seems to burn!
This is denied—and yet—the voice within
Tells what the vision meant, too plain—but still
The sanction of the prophet was requir'd—
—Was Nathan found at last?

Oniah. Long was the search
And hopeless, till at last we trac'd him on
To Moreh's hill; with hasty march he strode
To the tall summit, which o'erlooks the vale
Of Hinnom, where the dark flood finds below

His gulfy way, then looking back, he cast
An angry glance, " Yon city soon shall pour
" Her worst abominations forth in vain—
" Other abominations shall succeed!
" Loud in the breeze I hear the birds of prey,
" I see them hover o'er yon hated roof,
" Then westward wing their way, till Ephraim's wood
" Presents an unexpected feast:" no more
He deign'd, but plung'd amid the forest gloom,
Inscrutable to eyes profane, where still
He shuns all human converse.

David—(To Oniah, who retires.)

Retire, but within call—celestial light!
Yet thou wilt deign some dubious rays, before
Thou set'st for ever!
A welcome radiance, waning tho' it be
And dim! I will not lose the sacred glimpse
But now begin my long-neglected task,
Tho' late, yet not unconquerably hard
And labour in the twilight—first I'll chase
This man of blood from Israel—that when time
Allows—and to my injur'd friend repay
In gifts and honour, what by me he lost,
If they can pay such wrongs as his.
(To Oniah.) Dispatch
And call the delegates of Israel—now
Their king expects them and attends their claims.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Court before the Palace of David.

ENTER JOAB DISGUISED.

What do I see and hear? I left one siege,
It seems, to stand another! Rabbah's streets,
Were I this moment hem'd by hostile spears,
Were not more dangerous to my hunted life,
Than Salem's sacred squares.—I heard my name
In execrations sent from lip to lip,
As if it breath'd infection! I would find
As many hands to end my hated life
As if the sons of Ammon dogg'd my heels
Were I but known among them! soon I'll learn
The drift of this commotion, and, perhaps,
Discharge it on my foes.—'Tis true, the people
Have been aggriev'd, and, should their curses light
As they are meant, there lives not one whose life
Is more obnoxious! But I much admire
Why David hides his head, and lets the storm
Roll on resistless, like th' unbridled winds!
Great was his ancient influence—great the love
His people bore him, else my blood, long since,

Had paid the public hatred, but I hung
On him, like clasping ivy on the oak,
And while the vigorous root supply'd his stem,
My branches flourish'd green. But who are these,
Who toward the palace move in solemn pomp?—
By all my fears, the delegates of Israel.
What can it mean? I'll mingle with the crowd,
And learn their destination! Could I trust
The rumour of the day, they threaten *me!*
I'll follow with the stream, but find, perhaps,
A way at length to fix a lasting mound
Before the fury of the people's power.

AMOZ, HILKIAH, WITH THE OTHER DELEGATES OF THE PEOPLE, APPROACH THE PALACE.

TO THEM, ACHITOPHEL.

The king has sent me—(so I must pretend)—[*Aside*].
From you to learn the purport of your claims—
Ye might have staid, till from the conquer'd foe
Our general came triumphant, and laid down
His crested pride, to join in sage debate.
We then confirm your laws.

Hilk. The general's voice
Is futile here; in his own cause, no man
Is judge and advocate! The law we come
Now to propose regards himself the first.

Ach. If it be wrong to judge the meanest man
Unheard, and unimpeach'd, then judge not him!
Hilk. On him we lay no blame; nor derogate
From his illustrious rank, and kindred ties
To Jesse's royal stem; but this, (with him)
Respects a public cause!
Ach. Declare your grievance.
Hilk. It has been oft declar'd, but still in vain.
But pent up waters, though deep mounds oppose,
Will find their way at last. It is more fit
To form a regular channel for its rage,
Than to confine its fury, lest it rise
In dread rebellion, and convulse the globe.—
Why does the flower of Israel waste its prime
In foreign fields, while years on years revolve,
And sees our bounds extend, our people fade.
The soldier's glossy raven locks assume
The grisly hue, beneath the batter'd helm.
At home the hind out-toils the travel'd sun,
And sees the harvest of his labour swept
Away, to feed the famine of the war.
And, worse (if worse can be) to waste at home
The foul infections of an haughty court!
Ach. Whence this new insolence?
Hilk. Achitophel,
You much mistake, or wilfully misname
Our privilege; this insolence is old,
Old as the days of Aaron. Then the voice
Of the assembled tribes was law and truth,

Tho' now it sounds in some fastidious ears
Like treason!

Ach. What you gave, ye would resume.
When, all unable to defend yourselves
Against the numerous foes, that hem'd you round
On every hand, and held in manacles
Your martial ardour; then you claim'd a king
(Such as the nations boast) to lead you on
To conquest and to glory; now, averse
To your own choice (a choice comfirm'd above)
Ye would undo your work, and grudge to bear
That easy load ye laid upon yourselves.
But this, were this allow'd, by sudden change
Would quite unhinge all government, and break
The settled course of things; as if the moon
Of bleak December should assert her right
O'er July's sultry calm, and freeze *his* dews
In her cold crystal urn.

Amoz. Those arguments
Your royal master needs not to support
His state, for in his subjects' hearts he reigns:
Nor needs the claims of tyranny, to guard
His firm, establish'd throne; it is to give
His power a better basis we propose
These laws. Our loyal meaning is to give
Our king a surer title to our loves,
And counsel him to trust his sacred cause
To those we can confide in. This we claim—

We wish to see old Judah's line restor'd
To its first honours, and we must have way.—

Ach. Ye know not whom ye toil for, if ye did
Ye were more culpable, but now, no more
Ye know the hand that turns your headlong rage
To his own factious purpose, than the mass
Which from its flaming gorge the mountain flings
Knows, why it falls in ruin on the swains
And lays their harvest low!

Hilk. We need not blush
To name the man, whose virtues long have won
A nation's confidence, and given them trust
In all his days to come!

Ach. Produce the man
Whose merit soars above the common pitch
Of statesmen and of heroes!

Amoz. Who can doubt
The man, or who has borne so mean a lot
In Israel's tribes, as never to have heard
Uriah's name?

Ach. His virtues are allow'd
By all, nor can that age be quite corrupt
When such men are esteem'd! But should the King
Allow such ready monitors at will
To win their way by clamour, and besiege
His throne, on every petty discontent
What would become of majesty and awe,
What would become of Israel, still the prey
Of every popular gust? yet mean I not

To slight your grave proposal, when I find
The sanction of the senate join your claims;
But these are sudden measures, and require
Deliberation. To degrade the man
Whom years have crown'd with glory, seems a step
That leads to danger.

Amoz. For ourselves, we scorn
The danger, and we know the general host
Abhors their leader's view; nor aught supports
Obedience in the camp but David's name;
Remove that column, and the general sinks,
With all his martial fame.

Ach. Of this I own
Some symptoms have appear'd, the people's voice
Demands respect—but, for this day, the king
Requests a respite, till to-morrow's dawn
Matures his counsels, some domestic cares
At present have engross'd the royal mind:
To these he dedicates his present hours;
To-morrow is the people's!

[*After a short conference with the rest.*

Amoz. We depend
Upon his wisdom, and with joint assent
Postpone our message, till he claims our presence.

[*Exeunt* Delegates.

Ach. The man who watches not the turning tide,
Nor weighs his anchor, when the current serves,
Must leave his vessel stranded on the beach,

And mourn the moments lost! I did not rise
To this uncertain height to stem the blast
Of popular favour. He that holds the helm
Of state should learn to veer with ev'ry wind,
And have a harbour still secure and safe,
On whatsoever coast the shifting gale
Blows from all quarters under heaven—I saw
This tempest in the cradle, nor despis'd
Its infant frowns, nor, when it grew at last
To giant size, it found me unprepar'd
To ride the wild waves in my steady barque!—
Let Joab and them, who scorn'd to shun the flaw
Beneath its fury sink!—for me, I scorn
To share the sounding fall of wilful men.—
Another crew may man the toiling ship
Tho', by themselves undone, the mariners
Were all swept overboard. Uriah then
Is Israel's favourite, and too well I know
The guilty reason why the conscious King
Would wish to raise him!—He has one way left
To calm the people's and the husband's rage
At once; I see the former chief's decline,
And this new favourite's rise—Whate'er I owe
The general, to myself a larger debt
Is due, nor will I break the ancient law
Of self-defence, to aid a desp'rate cause—
But who comes here?——

ENTER A MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord! a stranger sues
For audience.
Ach. Let him come.
Mess. He shuns the view
Of public eyes.
Ach. Let him declare to you
His business.
Mess. He refuses to disclose
To any ear but yours, whate'er he claims!
Ach. What means this mystic semblance? Does he seem
A foreigner, or native, one of rank,
Plebeian, or above the common herd?
Mess. His habit speaks the soldier; but he seems
A man that on himself alone depends,
Scorning the sunshine and the storms of life,
Not us'd to tremble at a despot's nod,
But daring to confront him; as the time
And his disguise allow'd me, in his mien
And port I this could learn.
Ach. I hazard not
An interview with strangers—I have foes
That seek my life!—before I see this man
He must with cautious hand be scrutinis'd
For private arms.
Mess. Already that is done.
He of himself unfolded all his robe
And bade me search him round.

Ach. Then let him wait
My coming at the secret place of audience.

Scene changes to a Closet in the Palace.

ACHITOPEL, ▲ STRANGER.

Ach. What is your bus'ness, that in secret thus
You wish to have transacted here?—my time,
Incessantly employ'd in public cares,
No trivial interruption needs.
[Joab *discovering himself.*
Amazement!
The general in the palace!

Joab. Yes—I watch
While you securely sleep, nor seem to mind
The pent-up storm that seems to rage beneath,
And threats to blow you to the moon! For me
I heard its voice afar, I mark'd its rage
E'en from the camp, till under Salem's towers
It threatens dread explosion!

Ach. For what end
I know not, but for some important end
The noble chief forsakes his watchful post
By Rabbah's towers, in those more dang'rous walls
To face his unseen foes, that brew a storm
Which menaces more near.

Joab. Ideal horrors
Of popular commotion! Let it rage;

I've weather'd many worse! but this appears
A reptile, noxious vapour, carrying plagues
Deep in its bosom, which it sows around,
And drizzles death, where'er it sweeps along;
Already has it poison'd half the camp,
And now it sails away, and threats the city.

Ach. Be calmer! and by certain signs describe
Your secret foe.

Joab. His name at once declar'd
Discovers all—Uriah.

Ach. Whence your dread
Of him?

Joab. Are you to learn his guileful arts,
His serpent fraud, that hisses as it stings,
His whisper'd faction thro' the tribes of Israel—
It must be he—for since he join'd our bands
They hate the track of glory, and begin
To sigh for home. There was a time, of late,
When honour was a soldier's sole religion—
But now, by yonder heaven, they talk of right,
The rights of men and citizens, nor think
That fields manur'd with blood, and leaguer'd walls,
And thund'ring battlements (to swell the fame
Of conquerors and kings), and laureate wreaths
To the survivors, pay the sighs and groans
Of a few mournful widows!

Ach. What or who
Has taught them this new doctrine? have the murmurs
Of this seditious city reach'd the camp?

Or is there one among themselves who sows
Those cockles in their minds?

Joab. I tell thee, statesman,
Uriah must be he!

Ach. Uriah's name!
Say, is it sounded with more dread than yours?
Does *he* command the camp, conduct the siege?
Are you the rebel's master or his slave?—
What dread enchains your tongue, or what prevents
Your sentence on your substitute?

Joab. His art
Baffles my rage, nor does he leave a mark
E'en for the shafts of slander to infix
Its venom'd point. In loyalty's close mask
He veils the foulness of his deep designs
In darkness and in doubt! the common camp
Adores his name!—with more than wizard spell
Still as the factious clamour swells to Heaven
His balmy elocution sooths the storm
Like lenient oil on turbid waters pour'd—
Thus voluble and artful as the snake
That poisons with a kiss, he slips the hold
And baffles the pursuer!

Ach. Curse his virtues!
Worse than the red plague, and the hidden fire
That wins its fearful way against the wind—
His fame infects e'en here! the noisy crowd
That haunt our streets, return his hated name
In echo to the camp, the storm you fear'd

Has crost another whirlwind in its way
And sweeps the forest with redoubled rage!
Joab. And thou and I will in the whirlwind fall
Unless we foil its fury! Fate or chance
That led me here, I thank thee! else my hand
Perhaps had never drawn th' imperial sword!
—Canst thou conjecture yet the King's intent,
With what new honours he designs to load
His favourite?
Ach. But, that I know the king
Bound to his friends by more than kindred ties
For loyalty, and long-try'd services,
I would have thought he meant to raise him high
Or in the civil or the martial line.
Joab. It was not then for nought the soldiers seem'd
To hail his name at parting, with the sound
Of many a hearty farewel, and the strain
Of public benedictions mixt with tears!—
I see the deadly birth of many a moon
Begin its dreadful progress in the clouds,
And fall at length in horror on my head;
We must return the poison to his lips,
Or learn to drain the venom'd bowl ourselves.—
Ach. Depend upon the king!
Joab. The ties of blood!
My hapless hand has cut the holy knot
Long since—*my* loyalty is like *his* love!—
By a far different tenure I possess
My lofty post, I flourish in his fears;

He dreads me, like a phantom of the night—
Whene'er he dares to turn a steady eye
Upon the dark and formidable shape,
The shape is gone!—Achitophel! to thee
This is no mystery! since I clear'd my way
To military honours thro' the breast
Of Abner!—to my thought, I read my doom
Too plain, in David's alienated eye:
And did he know, that when he gave the word
For slaughter, echo would repeat the doom
From many a factious voice in Israel's camp
He would not linger long! This to thine ear
I trust with safety, for I know thy doom
Is link'd with mine, and thou wilt lend thine aid
To ward the coming ill.

Ach.—(Aside)— Is it even so?—
Then, let the general sink!—I seize the plank
And seek the shore without him!

To Joab. Could we fix
Some black impeachment on his hated name,
Or could we calm the people's breath that fills
His swelling sails, and wafts him to the post
Of royal favour, or, could wishes wake
The plagues that swept o'er Egypt, soon his head
Should lie as low as Abner's!—But alas!
We cannot steer the pinnace of the state
Against the heady current of the crowd!

Joab. Ha! statesman!—is it thus? have I upheld
Your pride, and rais'd you from the dust to spurn

Your patron! but I come not here, on thee
Dependent, for I know thee! other arms
And arts are mine, than puny statesmens' skill.
I came no suppliant, with a gentle shower
Of woman's tears to court thy slender aid,
But tell thee, in a voice of thunder, tell thee—
Thou must dispatch this rival, or resolve
To sink beneath his influence! he detests
Thine arts and thee—the watch-dog to the wolf
Bears not more mortal enmity than he
To thee! and dost *thou* hope to live, when he
Rules paramount? as well the shadowy ghost
Might dare the sun's full beam; he dies, or thou
Must fall!

Ach.—*(Aside.)*—I now must soothe him, till I point
My dart at leisure for a surer blow?

(To Joab.)

Thou hast convinc'd me! but in David's love
If he has found protection, who shall dare
To snatch him thence?

Joab. The law of self-protection
Shall clear thee to thyself! nor have I shar'd
With thee so long the chace of common foes
To doubt thy skill to circumvent or snare
Thine enemies at will! thou hast the ear
Of David!—thro' that organ pour the bane
That taints the mind, thou strik'st as sure a blow
As if the murtherer's dagger arm'd thy hand!—
It was no trivial errand call'd me here

From Ammon's leaguer'd walls! I could confide
The secret to no bosom but my own
And thine—reflect, tho' numerous are my foes,
Yet far more numerous are my friends, they spread
From Tadmor's eastern bounds to Jordan's flood!
Remember this, and let me ne'er behold
His hated face again, if thou wouldst wish
To see thy friend in peace!—I must away
And join my followers, ere the rosy morn
Blush for my seeming negligence! Adieu.

[*Exit* Joab.

Ach. To-morrow's dawn shall see thee linger here
Or I am not Achitophel!—Am I
A man to be insulted, menac'd, plung'd
In ruin! Selfish man! he nought regards
My cause, my life, my honour! so I lead
His hated rival to the dark abyss,
He cares not, tho' I drown along! but they
Who guide the helm of state, are not to leave
The rudder at each hot-brain'd fool's command
That mutinies for sway! It seems a trifle
For you to leave your camp, in mean disguise:
To leave the cause of nations on the point
And hazard of a moment, to pursue
Your guiltless foe, and from your Sovereign's heart
Tear the new favourite, and again secure
Your station with a second Abner's fall!
But I have felt your tyranny too long—
I help'd you! but the trade of blood has taught

The gratitude of wolves! But now behold!
Thy savage fury drives thee to a snare
Thou little dream'st of! (If the king but dares
To be that hero which he was of old,
And 'venge a people's wrongs.)—Let him do this—
Sedition's fangs are drawn, and Faction hides
Her glaring orbs, (that like the comet's beam
Menac'd the state) in everlasting sleep!
Two savages at once are in my snare;
If one escapes, he rends me—so perhaps
The other may—but gratitude would bind
Uriah's noble nature to repay
Life for his life, and thanks for dignity—
The *other's* disposition nought secures
But adamant, and Hell's eternal chains.—
This is no time to falter, or delay
My purpose—who attends there? Bid the guard
Secure the outward gate! A spy is caught
From Rabbah sent! But see, the king himself;
This e'en exceeds my most exalted hopes.

Enter DAVID.

David. What means this outcry! these unusual signs
Of trepidation, which your visage tells
As if some terrible conspiracy
Was found?

Ach. My Lord! if still you think me leagu'd
With the proud general to secure my sway

By his audacious aid, vouchsafe to hear
And judge my candour, loyalty, and truth
By what I now disclose!—In hot pursuit
Of brave Uriah's guiltless blood, the chief,
This military star, the lasting dread
Of Ammon, leaves his post in mean disguise,
And dares, beneath the glance of majesty,
Beneath the double frown of you and Heaven
To dictate murther to me!

David. Why, and how?
Amazement! can it be? would Joab forsake
His station? fling aside the general's staff,
To seize th' assassin's dagger? We must be
Convinc'd of this by more than vague report,
Belief is tardy to such 'scapes as these,
Prodigious, far beyond the reach of faith!

Ach. Your own sight shall convince you! for, by this
He is secur'd, and now, if e'er you dar'd
Or when Goliah or his brother fell
Put on the warrior! strike the rebel down
With that awaken'd thunder, which (he says)
You fear to wield, and start, e'en at the flash
Of your own bolt! His partizans are gone,
His faction distant! Here the serpent's head,
By its own fury and revenge impell'd,
Has found its way; a single blow decides
Its doom, and then its spires and deadly sting
Will cease to threat!

David. How will he meet my eyes?

Ach. Oh think no more on that! but crush him now,
Draw the knot hard that stifles him, or soon
The furies from thy hand will snatch the cord,
And change it to Rebellion's scourge, to drive
Thy friends to fill Sedition's deadly files!
His fall will soothe their rage! the powers above
Have given another cast for royalty!
Seize it with noble daring, or you're lost!

David. We must not be precipitate! the bent
Of Israel's mind would scarcely bear it now!

Ach. Think on their hatred for his crime, the theme
Of general detestation thro' the tribes!

David. Think how his name's ador'd in Israel's host!

Ach. 'Tis worth the trial—you may trust too far!—
Resolve to vindicate your name, or go—
Go to the wilds again, and stray forlorn
In Paran's woods, or in her gloomy caves
Conceal your menac'd head! you must not look
For Heaven's protection now, as when you fled
From Saul!—*that* was your fate, but this your fault.
That was a test of holy confidence,
But this, distrust in Heaven—resolve, and strike
The blow!

David. Is he secur'd?

Ach. He is, but yet
Feels not the pressure of the viewless snare
That waves its meshes o'er his sentenc'd head,
Not to be broken if your *fiat* seals

His doom at once!—I go to give the sign,
But must not now be seen!

David. Go, and return
Even with the expedition of a thought—
Each moment labours with the births of fate!—
His actions speak presumption, next to madness—
They call for punishment, or wild misrule
Will break subordination, and the child
Unborn, may live to curse the nerveless hand
Of Israel's king, who let the ruin spread.

[*Exit* Achitophel.

Since first I sheath'd the sword that ought to blush
With penal blood, for the lamented fall
Of Abner, still above my guilty head
The blade of heavenly justice seems to wave!
And is there then no second cause—no more
Let me extend the veil of others crimes
To hide my own abasement!—Hence, avaunt—
Say whence and what art thou, insidious fiend,
That striv'st with opiate draught to lull the sense
Of inward shame, and point'st another's sin,
As if the blood of Abner could efface
The stain of David! But perhaps the doom
Of Joab may break *one* chain, and give the means
Of reparation to that injur'd man,
Who well deserves, and well can fill the post
Of this audacious rebel! He is just,
And loves his king, tho' by the crow'd rever'd;
His name the tumult of the streets resounds,
His name the awful organ of the state

That speaks in Israel's delegated band
Exalts, and claims for him the martial wreath;
'Tis Heaven itself the welcome choice inspires;
'Tis Heaven that bids the tempest lift its voice,
And from the deep and stagnant gulph of air
Sweeps the contagion of the settled calm
Away!—I will obey the awful sign,
And lull the storm by some great sacrifice,
Before the whirlwind lays my honours low,
And spreads them in the dust—the voice of blood*
Cries for revenge, and strikes the vault of heaven.

[*Exit* David.

Scene—A Prison.

Joab. The statesman's art at last has gain'd the day,
And I must fall, the victim of my pride
And folly!—I have heard of miracles,
But never knew a lion snar'd before
In such a vile, envenom'd spider's web.—
My blood must pay the purchase of his guile—
But force I dread not—David would not risque
The stroke of public justice. But the steel
Of the assassin, or the well-drugg'd bowl
Will do the deed, and Abner's fall atone.
Blood will have blood—and is there such a charm
In dying groans, that they can pierce the clouds
And wake the sleeping thunder?—When I feel
The bolt, I will believe it. But my heart

* Viz. Of Abner, whom Joab had assassinated.

Still keeps its wonted measure—I may live
(For so my mind presages) to repay
My enemies, with grateful recompence.—
But who comes here? He does not bear the stamp
Of an assassin! royalty and youth
Blend in his aspect their united charms.
—'Tis Absalom—he has not yet forgot
His ancient friends, altho' in faithless courts
Long educated; well I know his mind
Fearless and prompt as lightning, yet as dark
As gathering tempests wrapt in midnight gloom,
Altho' a beauteous surface hides that heart—
—What may this visit bode?

To HIM ABSALOM.

Abs. What have we here
An eagle in a cage?
Joab. True, royal youth! the kites
And daws have won the day!
Abs. But who could dream
To see thee here! Is this thy generalship
To leave the siege?
Joab. A little time had told
The purpose of this step, a slender space
Had shewn, it was *thy* cause as much as mine!—
The common claim of royalty, the safety
Of David's house, as much as my command,
That led me from the camp in this disguise,

For one impending peril threatens both.

Abs. This artful involution of your cause
With ours, were calculated well to gain
Our favour, were it true.

Joab. By nobler arts
In happier times I thought I gain'd your love;
And, low as I am now reduc'd, I scorn
By adulation's little arts to gloss
A bad cause over! — What I say, I'll prove.
There is no room for hope, and if there were
I scorn by falsehood to obtain the boon.

Abs. I came not here to offer hope, or try
With empty promises of useless aid
To soothe your dying moments—yet, if duty,
The interest of my father, and the state
Permitted me to use my power, thy life
Were safe as mine!

Joab. I know thy influence well,
And well you know that I could pay the price
Of thy protection, were I once again
In freedom to collect my numerous friends:
But let me fall, by vulgar arts o'erthrown,
Ere I expose the life of David's son
To danger by my flight!

Abs. I know thy love—
aside. (Rather thy interest—) and could well depend
Upon thy loyalty: but other bars
Divide my cause and thine—my name upholds
The people's privilege! I swell the breath

Of opposition ; you support the power
Of new prerogative extended far
Beyond its ancient bounds !—

Joab. *Aside.* (I see his views !—)

And wouldst thou wish the people's privilege
Extended equal to their haughty claims ?
Wouldst thou desire to see Uriah rule
The banded powers of Israel ? Trust me, Prince !
That stern republican would lift his crest
Above the fading glories of the crown,
And with its gems purloin the public voice
To sanctify the robbery ! those brave youths
Who eastward far in conquest spread the name
Of David, soon would see their mould'ring bands
Sink like the files of Lebanon before
The woodman's stroke ! disbanded or confin'd
Tamely in garrisons to waste their prime,
And on our castled frontiers face the foe,
As lordly lions from their range confin'd
And chain'd, like shepherds' dogs ! Would this become
The throne of Judah ? *You* might see the time
When thou wouldst mourn the change, and weep to view
The martial fire of Israel thus confin'd,
To fume away, like smother'd lamps, at home !
How would the Arab and the Ammonite
Rejoice to see the torrent of our rage,
That swept their sandy plains, repose at last
In dull stagnation ?

Abs. Tho' I seem to blame

The bloody trophies from our neighbours won,
And fill the cry of faction, to preserve
The int'rest of our family alive,
And raise an artificial mound, to stem
The sinking torrent of the people's love,
That fleets from David's name so fast away;
Yet, were this head ordain'd to fill the crown,
I would not wish it had a hold so slight,
As to be puff'd away by every breath
Of popular discontent, I would not chuse
A bulrush for my sceptre, to be bent
By ev'ry breeze that blows!

Joab. And wouldst thou wish,
Like a state-captive, to implore thy guards
For liberty—to leave the palace dungeon,
And breathe the liberal air? Wouldst thou submit
To have thy progress bounded by the stream
Of Cedron's brook, nor ever from the brow
Of Olivet to see thy subject vales
Wave with their plenteous harvest? This must be
The fate of David! He has lost the people
By the same cause that lost his own esteem.
And when this head lies low, as soon it must,
Be this my consolation, that those eyes
Shall not behold my monarch's low disgrace,
Condemn'd at stated holidays to shew
The gaudy pageant of fallen royalty.
Led in the rabble's triumph!—

Abs. This the sun
Shall never see, if I survive to fill
The throne of Judah!

Joab. How canst thou avoid
This doom, if David shows the crowd the way
To domineer above the falling crown;
How wilt thou stem the torrent when it roars,
When that vile bird, that pecks the royal image,
Grows to an eagle size, with all her brood
Of feather'd imps about her, long enur'd
To prey on kingly power? then who will dare
To clip their wings, or lure them from the scent
Of palace plunder? Not the boasted wand
Of Moses, which dismist the living cloud
Of locusts to the Erythrean main!

Abs. There still are hopes, for yet this vulture's nest
Is callow, and a little art can rule
The unfledg'd family!

Joab. Yes—Would the King
Resign to thee the sceptre, or admit thee
The partner of his throne, he then might rule
O'er all the hearts in Israel.

Abs. Would that awe
Due to my father, to my falt'ring voice
Give its full compass, I could claim my share
Of royalty, in thunder's deepest note!

Joab. I praise thy piety, that deigns to wait
For thy legitimate boon, till sage Uriah,
A proselyte to loyalty and order,

Allows the sapient measure, founded deep
In wisdom, and permits thy greener boughs
To climb the withering stem of royalty,
And clothe it with new blossoms!

Abs. Deep I feel
The keen edge of thy censure! Jesse's stem
Was never doom'd to bend and sue for grace
To this new favourite, by a female hand
Rais'd to the pitch of greatness!

Joab. On that theme
Silence befits us best. The mind may see
What our eyes wink at!—

Abs. Yet a thought occurs!
I am not deeply read in Israel's story—
But say—was Saul, the royal Benjamite,
Chosen by the voice of Heaven, or of the people!

Joab. Nam'd by the prophet, but the common vote
Confirm'd it.

Abs. Then the people in their tribes
Pronounc'd the will of Heaven!—another question—
Was not this Benjamite, (although by Heaven
Propos'd, and by the people's voice confirm'd)
Yet by a righteous mandate set aside,
Hurl'd from his throne, although the sentence hung
In short suspense? did he not wear the crown
And royal mantle like a victim drest
For hallow'd butchery, before he fell
In Gilboa's fatal field?

Joab. Your sire possess'd

The sanction of the prophet—long before
The death of Saul. *His* hatred rose from hence—
Hence rose his persecution of thy father.

Abs. The people's voice at Hebron chose my father;
Their acclamations rais'd him to the stars,
But now the buoyance of their breath subsides,
And down he sinks!

Joab. Thy words forerun my thoughts,
And give that breath, which I had scarce presum'd
To picture in my mind! Nay, do not start!
The low declining cause of royalty
(Tho' by unusual methods) must be propp'd;
The public is our first concern, whate'er
Becomes of private ties.

Abs. 'Tis piety
To save a father, plunging in the stream,
Tho' at th' expence of half his cumbrous robes,
Which hinder his exertion. It were sacrilege
To strip a parent, were it not to save
His life.

Joab. Were but those hands unchain'd,
My voice could call ten thousand warlike hands
To aid thy claim!

Abs. I have the people's voice—
Yet such a great and arduous enterprize
Throbs at my heart in ominous presage!—
I dread the hazard of a precious life.
My father will not tamely share his crown,

Though all the tribes demand it! He has still
His band of heroes to support his claim,
Uriah at their head!

Joab. Had David fled
The prophet's holy unction, he had kept
The flocks of Bethlehem still, and never grasp'd
The rod of royalty. But thou, perhaps,
Hast doubts of me!—Uriah may be found
To suit thy purpose better.

Abs. Thou betray'st
The father! can the son confide in thee?

Joab. 'Tis by the son's advancement I preserve
The father, for unless with thee he shares
The steerage of the state, the barque is lost.—
Heaven smite this head with all its choicest plagues
If e'er I lost my loyalty to him!—
Yet you perceive how he rewards my truth!—
Consider, prince, my voice could oft have rais'd
A tempest, that had shook his blasted boughs
Ere yet he fixt his fibres in the soil!—
'Twas in *his* cause I rais'd my hasty hand
'Gainst Abner's life, and risqu'd the people's hate.
I graft you on his stock to save the stem,
To save you from the storm that threatens both!

Abs. Should I procure you liberty and life,
What pledge could you afford me of your faith,
And pure intention to support my claim
With all your means?

Joab. If I forget my faith
And promise pledg'd, you still can reach my life,
At least my fame, and at my armies' head
Thy voice can blast my fortunes, tho' my flag
Stream'd on the walls of Rabbah, and you know
My hatred to Uriah! I must leave
My deadly rival basking in the beam
Of royal favour, and your voice to him
If I deceive you, can at once secure
The rule of Israel's bands!

Abs. The die is cast,
I free thy *body* to secure thy *mind*—
But with the strong and viewless bond of souls
I first must bind you fast. I go to find
The means of your enfranchisement. [*Exit.*

Joab. Why go!—
I like thy soaring spirit! but, alas!
How shallow to suppose my schemes possess
As little reach as thine! Shall I employ
My master-engine, form'd with patient art,
To play for children's bidding; to disturb
The settled elements, and almost disjoint
Both worlds, to mount a bubble on the breeze
For fools to laugh at? No—presumptuous boy!
Thou didst not feel the still and subtle breath
That blew thy flame to such a raging height.—
My lungs deny their office, and thy blaze
Goes out! The stubble is consum'd, that fed
The conflagration. Go—convene thy tribes,
Hollow sedition in the gen'ral ear,

And bid the trumpet of rebellion sound,
Emblaze the streaming flag of proud revolt,
With gorgeous colours of necessity,
And exigence of state! I'll aid the king.
My loyal trump shall blow a blast so loud,
As soon shall drown thy factious minstrelsy,
And stun sedition's bands. A fair pretext
Thy riot shall afford, to weed the land
Of all those rash and fiery volunteers
That spend their mouths and bark at royalty.
This, this shall found again my tottering power
On adamantine base! the King shall reign
My delegate, and I his earthly God—
Hark—to the jarring music of yon gate
Hail! glorious freedom! Hail! unbounded sway!—

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

The Palace.

ACHITOPHEL.

Was it the fiction of an hideous dream
That gave the General to my cheated view,
Or did that demon, who protects him still,
Bring him in sight, and waft him hence away
To propagate his guilt, and force the King

And me, on dreadful measures? Must we then
Complete the bloody task? does hell's deep gorge
Claim her detested sacrifice? Behold
Those haughty lines, trac'd with a rapid hand,
"*I have escap'd the snare! thou canst not spread*
"*Cobwebs for eagles. Wouldst thou save thyself*
"*Thou knowst the ransom. Tremble and obey!*
"*Reflect on Abner's fall.*" Unheard presumption—
—But let me curb my tongue! those walls have ears,
Those palace-gates, that open'd to his flight
Spontaneous, to the viewless hand, that aids
His hopes, would close on *me*, did any word
Escape, which courtly malice could distort
To treason! well I see, but dare not own
I know the hand that freed him! hapless King!
Thou too must render up thy steadfast friend
To soothe these tygers? or they leap the fence
And o'er the fold in devastation range—
And, if mistaken tenderness unsteels
Thy resolution, thou, or I am lost;
Lost in the whirlwind of the General's rage,
Or in the deep devouring gulf absorpt
Of thy proud son's ambition!—all my trust
Is only this, that selfish ends will lead
The royal rebel, and the haughty chief,
To foul suspicion of each other's views
And each will think himself unsafe, unless
By force or fraud he fastens on the power
Own'd by the other!—Thus, between two storms

Of adverse wing, the royal barque may ride
Awhile in safety, tho' in giddy whirls
Dash'd round and round. This fury of the field
We first must sooth, the tyger of the court
Is yet unfang'd!—But here the father comes
Incenst, yet trembling at the prospect sad
Of sure domestic strife!

To HIM, DAVID.

David. To thee I owe
That here I stand deserted by my friends,
And of my God forsaken!
Ach.—(Aside.) (Thus the guilty
And the unfortunate, on others strive
To fling the galling load that weighs them down)
My royal master knows, the guard to me
Was not permitted!
David. Has my son the heart
(Unless, by some fell demon of the state,
Some pupil of left-handed policy
Like thee, seduc'd) to meet his Father's rage?—
If you revere not Joab, you fear his wrath!—
Ach. I therefore wish his fall!—
David. I know not that—
I know thee subtle, undermining, dark:
One, that would worship Moloch for his power,
And to his burning idol sacrifice
The son of thine own bowels!

Ach. Tho' I feel
The keen reproach, yet to thy grief alone
I charge its bitterness !—a cooler moment
When your corroding anguish is assuag'd
Will tell thee, that had I conniv'd at this
I ne'er had staid behind to meet thy rage,
But to the general's camp for shelter fled !—
The hand, perhaps, that freed him, is beyond
The seizure of thy power, or claims at least
Some spell to ward the tempest from his head.

David. Oh ! that my memory could escape that pang !—
Thou takest thy time to probe a father's wound
When heaven's deep judgment has disarm'd his hand,
Else thou hadst not presum'd !—but thou, perhaps,
Art leagued with both against thy sovereign lord.

Ach.—(Opening his breast.)
Secure my faith at once ! the solemn tomb
Contains no traitors, and my dust-clos'd ear
Will hear no imputations, which my soul
Abhors !

David. I know not whom, or what to trust ;
Forgive my rage—forgive a father's anguish,
To madness driven by the degeneracy
And treason of a much-lov'd son—Degeneracy !
From whom degenerate ? am I not a rebel—
A rebel to myself, and to my God—
My country's foe ? and can I blame the power
That, when I lost the reins of self-command,
Let loose this bosom tyger ; yet less guilty

Than those black passions which laid waste before
Each province of the intellectual world,
And manacled my reason? I must bear it!
Soon too, perhaps, the voice of public shame
Will thunder in my ears! My untold crimes,
Like deadly exhalations in the gale,
Will rise, and poison all the ambient air,
Till Nature's self, whose glories once I sung,
Will sicken at my name!

Ach. That danger yet,
I trust, is far remote!

David. How can you trust,
Or how believe? Does not Uriah feel
Bathsheba's guilt?

Ach. He keeps in silence still
His knowledge, or his doubts. A stronger spell
May lead him home. The banquet is begun
By your command. The failure of a night,
Chance might have caus'd, or some fantastic vow.

David. O for a prophet's eye, to mark the scenes
To-morrow's sun must see!
This night, revolving on her ebon throne,
Winds up the doom of Bathsheba and me.
I cannot bear to ponder on her doom.
Ruin'd by me, for me to public shame,
Perhaps to ignominious death expos'd.—
On me, me, rather let the tempest fall—
I was the tempter, I deprav'd her mind,

I blew the embers of a former flame
To their first conflagration.

Ach. Yet, my lord,
All may be well. You tremble at a shade,
The coinage of your fancy. If her spouse
Can stand the siege of circulating bowls,
Of music's charm, and hymeneal songs,
Warm as the amorous descant in the grove
Of Araby the blest, which to the fair
The raptur'd lover chants, as evening draws
Around their flowery couch her raven pall;
Then is he more than man. But he will melt,
The subtle spirit thro' his nerves will thrill,
Till his rapt fancy represents his spouse
Drest in the bridal robe, while o'er her cheek
Soft wishes and soft fears alternate stray!

David. Night wears apace, and soon the crisis comes.
Go thou and watch his passions how they tend,
Whether the bowl has sooth'd his cares asleep,
Or drawn the painful secret from his heart.
If so, we must prepare to meet the worst.

Ach. I go.—[*Aside.*]—(But I have spirits there at work
Thou little dream'st of, to unlock the soul,
And draw the painful secret forth in storms.
The noble savage must be roused to rage,
Else he would ne'er be tempted to the snare.)
[*Exit* Achitophel.

David. Oh! what a torture of suspense I feel,
While in the balance of my rival's mind,

That plays with every breeze, my doubtful doom
Hangs trembling! If resentment steels his soul
Against his spouse, to-morrow's rising sun
Lights up my shame, and paints my midnight deeds
To gazing multitudes! Already Heaven
Has left me, and I now must court the power
Of reeling madness, in the luscious grape
To aid my purpose! To what noxious fiend
Must I address my prayer, to cloud the beam
Of reason, and before suspicion's eye
His gaudy tints display, that lead the mind,
Like the night-wand'ring fire to seeming safety?
Oh, blessed times! when, thro' the ruffling storm
Of fell adversity, that howl'd around,
When in each breeze I heard the savage yell
Of them that sought my life; against the gale
That seem'd to bear my blasted hopes away,
My prayers could gain the steep ascent to heaven,
And draw a beam of comfort from the skies,
That shot athwart the gloom its vernal ray,
And lighten'd all within! Tho' lonely caves
Conceal'd my slumbers, and the desart hills
Oft saw my midnight steps persued along
By the rude tempest, and relentless man;
I did not fear *you* then, my deadliest foes!
Seducing demons! who in gaudy shapes
Bask in the day-dreams of unruffled life.
The air was winnow'd *then* by wholesome gales

That shatter'd your fine forms, and bore away
The fraudful vision! In the thunder's voice
I heard the plaudit of approving Heaven—
E'en the fierce lightning wing'd my ardent soul,
Above the conflict of these elements,
To scenes of endless peace! Now all is peace
Abroad. The deadly feud begins within.
Oh! for his voice again, tho' in the tone
Of Heaven's terrific organ, as it spoke
With awful voice, yet friendly, to the land
Of Egypt! I would hail the welcome sound.—
Now, like a barque becalm'd, with languid sails,
I'm left to slumber on the stagnant wave,
While the wild passions rise in rude revolt
Against their pilot, whose unprosperous hand
So madly trifled with the friendly gale!—
I cannot linger thus—Impatience burns
For some relief! But soon the crisis comes.
The watchful eye of Jealousy may sleep,
By love compos'd to rest, and peace return!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

ELIEZER, JONADAB, URIAH—AS RISING FROM A BANQUET.

Eliezer.

You had his love before—the public voice
Now sanctions his—and, on the swelling gale

Of popular applause, your worth shall mount
To heights unthought before! Then, why this caution?
This cold reserve? I would not wish the king
Should know it, he would deem such cool return
But ill beseem'd a friend so nobly try'd
In fortune's worst extreme.

Uri.—(Aside.) (I see your drift,
But I will ward she blow.)
Enough, my friends,
For temperance—the social rite is paid.
Courts are the scenes for revels, mirth, and joy—
It is so *now* at least. There *was* a time
When other maxims rul'd the royal houshold;
But different manners suit with different men.
Here, while the full tide flows of genial joy,
And crowns the rosy bowl, it ebbs afar
At Rabbah, where the bands of Israel watch
The midnight rude, alarm from Ammon's walls.
It suits not *me* to banquet, while my friends,
Perhaps, in bleak want spend the livelong night,
Their convoys by the roving Arab seiz'd—
It does not suit a soldier.

Jon. If my thoughts
Could wander from the present scene, nor camps,
Nor ambuscadoes, nor the night-alarm
Would claim my contemplation! Other views,
Of more pacific import, might demand
The meditations of a youthful mind.

Eliez. Where would your fancy point?

Jon. To rosy bowers,
And moonlight glades, by gentle whispers led,
And beauteous forms soft stealing from the view,
Where no rude trumpet, nor barbarian yell
Disturb the sleeping lovers!

Uri. Such thefts as these
Have often stolen the laurel from the brow
Of conquering Israel, and transfixt her shield
With hostile javelins; still, where'er we turn'd
Our waving banners, our most deadly foes
Were found at home!

Jon.—(Aside.)— What magisterial censure.
But he is gall'd—I fear we've gone too far.

Eliez. Pardon a jest—the language of our friend
Is free—perhaps his manners not less pure
Than those that wear religion's darkest mask.

Uri. I own my ignorance, nor yet can learn
How, when th' unguarded ear and roving eye
Is open to contagion, by the use
Of this too liberal language, from the taint
The mind can 'scape.

Jon. Plain truth was never held
So deep a crime before—but I am school'd.

Uri. Do you adorn it with the sacred stamp
Of manly plainness thus to blazon vice?

Eliez. You're too punctilious—form'd of antique mould,
And wedded to the ways of a republic,
They fit not monarchies.—Those sterner virtues

Might suit, perhaps, the camp where Joshua rul'd,
Or Gideon.—But the season now is gone!
There was a time to mourn and beat the breast,
'Tis gone—the storms of winter now are past,
And jocund May leads on the playful hours.

Uri. Virtue and honour I suppos'd the same—
The same their obligations, not to change
With cloud or sunshine, like the vernal flower
That courts the rising sun, and folds her leaves
When night ascends.

Eliez. While, like the vigorous stem
Of baleful yew, that braves the winter blast,
You wear your gloomy honours thick upon you,
And sicken all the sacred train of mirth
Around! I envy not such solemn pomp.
The blessed sun that warms my mounting blood
Points other joys to me!—

Uri. The people's voice,
The language of misrule, the general cry
Of mutiny; do those with soft applause
Immortalize that riot and excess
That cause the intestine plague? *they* too proclaim
Your vices with like freedom to the world,
But in a louder tone, and boldly tell
What you conceal, the ruin that attends
Such principles.

Eliez. That man may preach at ease
Of temper'd blood, and boast his self-command,

Whom heavenly virtue in an angel's form
Expects, to bless his honourable toils
At home with mutual rapture.—

Uri. Now, by Heaven—
Did not my honest sword disdain the blood
Of such a venom'd sycophant, a reptile
Bred in the sunshine of a court, that word
Had been your last!—malignant miscreant,
The sting within that sneer, which fits a fiend
In all the triumph of infernal glee,
Confirms it! cursed be those fatal charms,
And douhly curst the guilt-concealing hour
When first her broken faith became the theme
Of court applause!

Jon. What fiend impels you thus
Beyond the bounds of reason? say, what proof,
What test, or knowledge of your spouse's guilt?
What wretch so busy with a matron's fame
As to compel you thus to blast her truth
With foulest imputation?

Uri. All the skill
Of glozing rhetoricians, to conceal
Or varnish o'er her guilt, are futile! vain!—
If the light gossamer might wrap the limbs
Of the fell tyger, or the famish'd pard
In lasting bondage; then the flimsy art
Of courtiers might control my waken'd rage!—

Jon. Your proofs I know not—all is new to me
As my surprise!

Uri. It is no common pain
That wrings the secret from a soldier's breast
Which burns the cheek to tinder, and writes shame
Indelible, a foul stigmatic mark
On him and his for ever! Do I live,
And am I patient underneath my wrongs?—
No—earth shall tremble, and high heaven applaud
My vengeance! I have proofs, convincing proofs
Why—honest Nature spoke it in her face
At her first sight of me! tho' she was school'd,
Prepar'd, and tutor'd (as it since appear'd)
For the encounter! I was warn'd before—
And she had drest her looks to scorn surprise,
But a few searching questions soon brought up
The conscious blood to her adulterous cheeks!
And she had paid the forfeit on the spot,
But Heaven restrain'd me!

Jon. Have you nought but this?
No proof, no evidence?

Uri. Yes—proofs on proofs,
As soon the sun shall see!—

Jon. Forgive—forget!
Are you a soldier?—Let your self-command
Proclaim your manhood!

Uri. I—shall I forgive?
To let contempt pursue my taintless name?
Tamely to suffer wrong?—It must not be.
Tho' all the vicious court connives at crimes,
Uriah shall revenge, tho' yawning hell
Should flame across his way!

Eliez. And how revenge?
You little think how strong an arm is rais'd
To guard her threaten'd life!
Uri. Altho' the fiend
Who blasted all my hopes, should take the form
Of one, who proudly boasts the royal blood;
The FATHER of his PEOPLE would revenge,
Altho' the stroke should wound a father's soul!
The safety of his throne, his spotless name
Demand the painful task.
Jon. Should he deny—
Should he, to screen the high-born criminal,
Offer unhop'd-for honours, and a place
Which envy might repine at, and your foes
Lament to see, could you support the thought
That your blind vengeance had embroil'd the house
Of David, and transfixt a father's heart
With grief's envenom'd shaft, and burning shame?
Ponder the sad result, before you dip
Your foot in blood.—
Uri. Will Justice hear the plea?
Eternal Justice! will *she* break her sword
Because a father weeps? Will his salt tears
Assuage the penal flames, that heavenly wrath
Awakes to punish crimes? Heaven to *this* hand
Entrusts her awful cause, and were I false
To her eternal trust, the crimes to come,
Patron'd by this example, would derive
Their blackest guilt from me, (should I refuse

To draw the delegated sword of vengeance)
A soldier's honour, and religion calls,
It is the cause of man, the cause of heaven,
And by our mighty legislator's soul
I will not slumber till I 'venge his laws !—
I'll instant to the king, and boldly claim
The strumpet's doom, and if the king denies
My claim—my country's universal voice,
Swell'd to an hurricane, shall echo mine—
Ten thousand hands shall drag the culprit hence,
E'en from the guarded steps of Judah's throne !
[*Exit* Uriah.

JONADAB—ELIEZER.

Jon. See what a tempest your ungovern'd tongue
Has rais'd ! Was *this* a time to gall the wound
That rankled in the husband's heart ? The king
Will on thy folly charge whatever ills
May come ; my care had mixt a cup of balm
To lull the soldier's anguish, and my hand,
Perhaps, had drawn a soft and gaudy veil
Between his mental eye, and those dire scenes
That wake his fury. With unhappy hand
You tore the curtain down, and gave to view
Those hideous images that fire the brain !
By Heavens, the King shall know it—not on me
The blame shall lie !

Eliez. Go ! and inform the King

Short-sighted man! and are you then to learn
Who gave th' ingredients which this skilful hand
Dash'd in the soldier's bowl?—their first effect
(Like other poisons,) seems ungovern'd rage
And furious frenzy; but this stormy gust
Will soon fatigue itself, and work its end.
The tempest sweeps along the waste of Heaven,
And seems to drive the baffled vapours on
In rude voluminous triumph, but full soon
It breathes its rage away—the gloomy foes
Rally their files o'er all the shaded sky,
Surround their victor, and involve his plumes
In humid bondage, while the welkin weeps
The wild winds durance, in continuous flow.

Jon. Explain your mystic words.

Eliez. There is no need—
The dread event that labours to the birth
Shall soon disclose it. Tho' Uriah seems
(Exulting in his freedom) to defy
The congregated powers of earth and hell,
And on the public favour to rely,
Yet thro' the waste of night, across the wild,
O'er many a desart league of burning sand,
All viewless to the eye, the waving snare
Extends, which wraps the warrior in its folds.
His hands are fetter'd, tho' he feels it not,
And soon his silent tongue shall own the spell.

Jon. But why provoke his rage?

Eliez. The bird, that strives

In the fine meshes of the fowler's snare,
But binds himself the firmer, and exhausts
His little strength in vain! That clamorous rage,
That haughty language of insulted honour,
These vows of vengeance, and that fiery glance,
Whose lightning seem'd to wither all around,
Were but the playthings of superior art,
That bids the tempest rage, and the rude blast
Harrow the sea, and cover any shore
We please, with shatter'd wrecks! While we above,
From the calm summit of imperial skill,
Laugh at the lightnings as they dance along
Th' interminable waste of clouds below.
This is our triumph, tho' the awful scenes
Are yet involv'd in night!

Jon. Your words, I fear,
Import Uriah's doom; and must he fall?
Is there no charm to soothe a husband's rage,
But death's eternal sleep! No refuge given
But the asylum of the quiet tomb,
For his swoln anguish?

Eliez. Hear me, and be dumb
For ever! He, or thou and I must fall,
Should he survive; his wrongs, the people's voice,
His claims of public favour, would compel
E'en David to adopt him, and resign
To his stern grasp the rudder of the state.
The barque, indeed, might steer in safety on,
But we, the ancient leaders of the crew,

Must perish, or forsake the light'ned keel;
His zeal would deem us but the useless lumber
Of the disorder'd ship; or, should we 'scape
The wreck that threatens from Uriah's pride,
We could not stem another deadlier storm,
That from another coast of angry heaven,
Threatens no less—the general, his sworn foe—
Tho' secret, never will forgive the men
Who let Uriah 'scape the deadly snare
That holds him now—and well you know, his hate
Is mortal, as his power is uncontroll'd.
I had my orders, else I had not dar'd
To rouse the lion's rage. Behold the king!—
My task demands me, I must not be found
To loiter at this juncture.—Fare thee well.—

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene continues.

ENTER DAVID AND ACHITOPHEL.

Ach. Yet he may live;—but royalty must die
If he survive; subordination, rule,
And order, all must cease!

David. Did he disdain
The proffer'd honour! Did he scorn the bounty
Of him, whose friendship was his noblest pride
Of old?

Ach. You seem to doubt your faithful servant.

If you would condescend yourself to try
His temper, and observe the brooding storm
Beneath the settled gloom that clouds his brow.
Your doubts would end in certainty!

David. Alas!
I know too much. I heard him threaten loud,
And shake the palace with vindictive rage.
This is not to be borne! Yet, coward conscience!
—I trembled at the menace of my slave,
As if the thunder lent its awful sound
To every accent—what does he resolve?

Ach. I know not—thro' the hall that fronts the gate
He roams disturb'd, and often smites his brow;
Then calls on friendship, and arraigns the name
Of hapless love!

David. Did any word or sign
When the freed soul was stripp'd of its disguise,
And spurn'd all danger from a mortal foe,
Seem then to point at me?

Ach. Not, as I heard—
He rather seem'd on you to place his trust.

David. The torture of the fiends is in the thought!
Generous, believing man! altho' I know
That whatsoever sycophant disclos'd
His consort's lapse, with keen malignant joy
Pointed at me, yet, tardy of his faith,
My friend, my injur'd friend! believ'd him not!
Why will he rush on danger thus, and brave
Perdition for the sake of doubtful vengeance?

I cannot, must not hurt him! I have sinn'd
Beyond redress already—I must save him!
Ach.—*(Aside.)*—(I'm lost, if he relents!)—My royal Lord
Trust not appearance—he may know too much,
Tho' with such art his knowledge he conceals,
Design'd, perhaps, to throw you off your guard,
And give him means to strike the surer blow.
Your noble nature flings a gorgeous veil
Of seeming excellence before your sight!
Thro' your own matchless medium you behold
The characters of others. Every tint
Of your own genuine virtues, on their shadows
Reflected falls, and gilds the vapours o'er
(Like evening's wat'ry vest!) with fluid gold!
Dost thou suppose Uriah's soaring soul
Can stoop to wrongs, and to a woman's fall
Limit his daring? He has other views!
Go to the senate! to the crowded camp!
You see his footsteps like a stormy god
Thro' the tumultuous waves; across the wild
And o'er the burning sand, Uriah's name
Loads the full gale: from Arnon's distant shore
To Salem's towers, the thorough-fare of Heaven,
On its broad bosom wings from clime to clime
The magic syllables! the common herd,
Nay, even the reverend Sanhedrim proclaim
The seeming virtues, which adorn the robe
That hides his dark ambition!—do you doubt?—
Doubt on! till faction and revolt o'erturns
The steady balance of imperial power!—

David. His guilt at least is dubious—mine is certain;
I'll own it—ask forgiveness—well I know
His generous nature!—

Ach. Did you ever know
This generous friend forsake his first resolve?
I grant his nobleness of mind as high
As e'er upheld the diadem, or rod
Of regal sway: will he consent to soil
His taintless honours with degrading shame,
And live, a breathing monument of scorn?—
He would not for this kingdom! He'll revenge
His wrongs on you or her.

David. Did not my fall
Involve a people, I would much prefer
My fall to hers—for oh! whatever power
In love's soft name has fasten'd on my heart,
There, there it domineers! The purple tide
That warms my veins is not more native there!—
Nor does the wat'ry waste obey the moon
With more subjection.

Ach. You must learn to bear
Her loss!—But that is small—you must already
Have own'd the call of Prudence to resign her
To her first lord—already you have felt
The cruel, deep divorce!—the second pang
Will not be half so poignant as the first!

David. Too deep I feel the bitter irony!—
I know his proud integrity would scorn
To mingle with contagion!—Hell reward

The man that told the secret!—But for him
All had been well.

Ach. We only now must toil
For the best possible!—among the worst
There is a choice of evils; when the hope
Of good is gone already! Well I know
(Or my old observation quite has fail'd)
There's danger in the man! His smooth address,
His favour with the populace, denote
Sinister meaning. His attractions draw
Like the sun's influence to the point of noon
The watery vapours, till his stores are full,
And then the deluge comes, and drowns the world.

David. I cannot think it.

Ach. Confiding in his pity! He perhaps
May grant forgiveness, and again receive
His consort to his bosom—No—by Heaven
He ne'er will do it; were there nought besides
To steel his resolution but the fear
Of losing popular favour, should his baseness
Be known, as it must be!—at least surmise
Would construe all the honours he might gain
To shameful bribes for silence and consent.
A man may oft be injur'd in his bed,
While it's unknown, and may be still a man:—
If he consents, and looks upon the theft
With undistinguishing, cool apathy,
He is no more a man, but a vile slave—
An idiot:—such Uriah ne'er was deem'd.

David. A dreadful aggravation of my crime!

All this in horrible detail I saw,
Ere my first lapse, a certain consequence—
And yet I fell—tho' leisure was allow'd
For full deliberation, and the damp
Of cold presage, that chill'd me to the heart,
Might well have bid th' unhallow'd ardour cool.
I persever'd, and now I must go on,
Or perish by retreat: a stable stand
On those deluding, slippery paths of vice
Is not allow'd.

Ach. Can you resign her?

David. Never!
She lives an inmate here! Even Nature's voice
Declares her born for me, and me for her!—

Ach. Make her for ever thine.

David. But how?

Ach. All men
Are mortal, and the shaft that flies by day,
Or pestilence, that walks the gloom of night,
May reach their lives.

David. Ha! Belial! name it not!
The thought is madness! must adult'ry, then,
Be cloak'd by murder?

Ach. Think Bathsheba lost—
Fallen, fallen a victim to the judge's doom;
You live a victim to the public scorn,
Perhaps dethron'd and exil'd!—that is small.—

David. What worse?—exile with her, could she be sav'd,
Were—but I rave!—some frenzy fires my brain!

Must I, by merit rais'd, when haughty Saul
Had fall'n from Heaven's protection, thus abuse
The gift?

Ach. I own, in thee religion lives;
Thy fall involves her ruin; on thy head
The solemn fabric sinks, with all its pomp,
And Israel's veneration, turn'd with toil
From idols, like the tide that bursts its bounds
Reverts with violence to its former course—
A single life prevents it!—

David. What a life!

Ach. When Abraham and Jephtha first resolv'd
To sacrifice their children, was there nought
To wring the bosom, or to melt the heart?
And what induc'd them, but religion's cause?
What seal'd the father's vow?—Religion's cause.
He for religion's cause a daughter slew;
You scruple to resign a dangerous man,
Whose life protracted, threats the very soul
Of state, religion, and your life itself!—
For when it threats your life, it threatens all!—
Religion's being on your life depends!
—You must acquire more fortitude, or sink
Beneath your numerous foes!

David. I must not think.

Ach. There is no time for thought—resolve at once—
Dost thou not wish the obstacle remov'd
By any safe expedient?—Search thy heart—
Examine well within!—I know thou dost—
But Heaven, that marks the movement of the mind,

In equal balance weighs the guilty deed,
And guilty thought! Already is thy mind
Deep stain'd with blood, in Heaven's impartial eye,
And sentence past already. What remains
But give th' imperial mandate—and 'tis o'er—
One act of penitence atones for all.

David. And must I yield against my better sense?
My reason reels, and all within is doubt.

Ach. No choice is given, but everduring shame,
Or one decisive blow, that lops away
The noxious plant that shades your nobler views.
It is a public cause, the cause of kings,
Of Israel! and shall private cares pervert
That necessary doom, which public love
Demands? Can you resolve to suffer shame,
(The last of ills! which angels scarce can bear)
To see the tribes assembled to thy fall,
Like some stern woodman's train, whose sturdy strokes
Assail the noblest plant of all the grove,
Till, overcome by many a ruthless blow,
It bows th' aerial head and sweeps the ground?
Will you encounter this, and live to see
Some alien stem transplanted in your room.
Some Gentile god, with solemn rites abhorr'd,
Expel the dread of Israel from his shrine?—
Such things must be, if to the rising gust
Of popular fury stern Uriah joins
His vengeful clamours—should he send around
The dreadful tokens of a husband's wrath,

Thro' each astonish'd tribe, as he of old,*
Who turn'd the torrent of a people's rage
On one devoted town, and sacrific'd
A slaughter'd people for a wife abus'd;
What were the consequence?—Wild anarchy,
And nameless horrors! Law, religion, form,
And loyalty, all trampled under foot.
Bathsheba's sprinkled blood will rouse the flame
To tenfold rage, whose fury will involve
The palace and her king! But here, behold!
The victim comes, from thine own lips to hear
Her sentence.

David. Save me, save me from her eyes!
They flash the vengeance of insulted Heaven.

Ach. *(Introducing Bathsheba.)*
Look on the vengeance of insulted Heaven!
And think—will Heaven permit a form like this
To plead in vain—she flies to thee for refuge.
[*Exit* Achitophel.

David. Bathsheba! oh—was this a time to claim
An interview? or art thou come to see
The double triumph of thy fatal charms
Over thy husband and thy king at once?
He domineers below, and thou art come
To charge me with your wrongs—is this an hour
To add new aggravation to a load
That bends me to the ground.

Bath. Our shame and woe
Are mutual; but, my lord, you much mistake

* Judges, c. 20

The purpose of my coming at this hour
Of danger and distress! I know my guilt—
I feel what self infliction wounds within,
Yet still some inborn dignity remains,
Yet undeprav'd, still some regard to truth
And justice, which for ever locks my lips
From charging on thy soul this fatal lapse,
(Fatal to me!)—I come to ease thy care,
And reason down the conflict in thy soul!

David. Then—I have drawn within the bounds of guilt
And cureless sorrow, this distinguish'd mind,
This generous spirit, which disdains to charge
The cruel spoiler with her deadly wrongs!—
For this, Bathsheba, I was not prepar'd!—
Rather pursue me with thy keen reproach!
Charge me with all the guilt! A manly mind
Should have repell'd the foe, not sunk, like me,
To childish weakness! I was steel'd within,
But I flung off the armour of the mind
Before the danger came!—

Bath. It was surprise—
A smother'd passion, by a sudden spark
Rais'd to a conflagration, which o'ercame
All obstacles—that conquest o'er yourself,
When, with a trembling hand and bleeding heart,
You first resign'd me to your chosen friend:
(Too well I mark'd, and never can forget,
Your pangs that moment, when you lost me first;
Resign'd me, like a martyr to your honour!)

That was a glorious trial, whose desert
Should soothe your present woes!—Ah would to Heaven!
Thy friend had caught the godlike zeal of friendship
That warm'd thy bosom then! I had not now
Been doom'd to sate his vengeance with my blood.
He took th' advantage of a solemn vow
By a stern father's will impos'd before;
And well—too well he knew, my father's will
Was his sole claim! he ne'er possess'd my heart—
And when a nobler int'rest warm'd my breast,
It was not like a soldier, nor a friend,
To seize th' unwilling hand!

David. He was my friend;
For me he risqu'd his life, and, tho' to part
From thee, was then a summons like the stroke
Of death, I own'd not then that selfish mind
To rob my fellow-soldier and my friend
Of such a gem, beyond the wealth of kings
To buy.—But pardon me—this language *now*
Must be renounc'd for ever!

Bath. Too, too well
I know the sad necessity. But hear
At least a palliation of thy fault
From her who feels her own, nor fears to add
A share of that, which, to yourself unjust,
You claim, a debt which Heaven too clearly see.
Is due to me, and what my life must pay.—
I blame not him, although it look'd like coldness,
That such a length of time unheeded past
And yet his spouse he claim'd not, from the hand

Which first bestow'd her.—Did he seem to prize
The present when it came?—a few short months
Had seen me wedded, when the trumpet's call
Lur'd him from love and the soft lap of peace,
Tho' no invasion shook our trembling bounds,
And our indulgent legislator's voice
To the new-wedded pair had given a year
Unvex'd by wars alarms.

David. It prov'd at least
His love of fame, and of his king's renown!

Bath. I too could give my life for Israel's cause,
To purge the taint affronted pride disdains
From his imperious mind, who slighted me—
Who flung me, like a worthless toy, away,
Nor thought it worth a lordly husband's pains
To throw away a few neglected hours
To gain a consort's heart, too cold before!
Yet to his vengeance I must pay my life,
Whose scorn the seeds of alienation sow'd—
The source of all my woes! yet this is well!
Since, ere suspicion singles out my lord,
The tomb shall close on me, and bury all—
Deep, deep below the busy fiend shall rest
Whose obloquy might reach the royal name
Did I survive!

David. And you—must you atone
(Less guilty far) for my more deadly crimes—
It must not, shall not be!

Bath. The law's demands
Must be obey'd—they claim a forfeit life.

David. No palliation, no excuse allow'd
For one whose fatal fall her spouse's fault
Perhaps alone had caus'd?

Bath. So human laws
Ordain—perhaps in other worlds than this,
In the great tribunal that sifts the heart,
Distinction may de made between the tinge
Of guilt and weakness!

David. I, alas! was chosen
Heaven's delegate (had I deserv'd the name,
This ne'er had been!) I ought—but now 'tis late.
To have display'd at once my sov'reign power
To solve this dark enigma of your fate;
But, self-involv'd in guilt, I durst not move
Lest hissing scorn, and obloquy, combin'd,
Should hurl me from the throne!

Bath. Would heaven my doom
Were past! then all would end, and peace return
To your perturbed spirit. [*Going.*

David. Stay—O Heaven!—
Must she submit to fate? whose generous mind
Would hazard all for him who caus'd her fall?
It must not, cannot be!—Nature exclaims
Resistless, raging, in the cause of her
Who reigns in ev'ry pulse! yet go—send in [*Ex.* Bath.
Achitophel to me; his keen research
May find some specious means to reconcile
My fighting duties! O unhappy fall!
Other asylums I was us'd to find
In my distress, while I had trust in Heaven!
I now must trust to man.

ENTER ACHITOPHEL.

David. Achitophel!
Is there no port! no refuge from this storm
That menaces so loud?
Ach. The storm is o'er
Uriah waits your orders to the camp;
Ere morn he must depart!
David. Why thus prevent
The dawn?
Ach. I know not, but conjecture lends
Her glimmering lamp that throws a dubious ray
On the dark purpose of the warrior's mind.
David. Tell what you fear at once!
Ach. In two days hence
The judge of life and death ascends his seat.
—This will afford him space to reach the camp
To sound revolt among his partizans;
Then, with the expedition of a bolt,
That, glancing from the shiver'd rock, o'erthrows
The blasted tree, his fiery-footed haste
Will chase his hapless consort to the grave!
David. Ha! is it so—it bears a dreadful form
Of something like the truth!
Ach. Resolve, my Lord!
This is no time for pause! Bathsheba's doom
Is fixt already, past thy power to ward
If he returns.
David. How know'st thou that? explain!—

Ach. Too well—a friend of his has borne the scroll
To Zadoc.

David. Prove it!

Ach. Oh my Lord! is this
A time to search for proofs, or is my faith
No better known?—when he returns, the proofs
Will come in thunder, when redress is past!—
—Nay more, the malecontents, who lurk'd of late
In corners, meet in crowds, and waft the sound
Of clamorous obloquy from band to band,
Their slanders spare not e'en the royal name!
They only want a leader to assert
The baffled claims of Benjamin's proud race!

David. This is but rumour still!

Ach. But I have proofs
Authentic, strong,—I found the means to stop
The hasty messenger, till morning dawn,
And gain'd the parchment. [*Shews a Parchment.*
See! 'tis sign'd and seal'd
E'en with Uriah's hand—yet trust my word—
Such is the influence of thy haughty subject,
Not in your camp alone, but in your courts,
E'en in your family, I found it hard
To gain the proof, and was compell'd to use
A statesman's art, where statesmens' power was vain!—
His partizans are numerous, mighty, proud—
All friends of old democracy, and sworn
Under that venerable name, to rend
The sceptre from thy hand, or chuse a King

Subservient to their views, and close confin'd
Within their new-made limits.

David. He, that gave
Can keep the sceptre mine! but we must find
Some means to save the state.

Ach. To save thyself
And all that's dear.

David. No more—we must contrive
To fetter headlong rage—nor risque our all
At jealousy's demand, or faction's frown,
The means shall be resolv'd upon within. [*Exeunt.*

Scene—Another part of the Palace.

URIAH—ADRIEL.

Uri. And is it thus the King has learnt to treat
His early friends? It was not so of old!
—Sent for in haste, exalted with vain hope
Of freedom from this tyrant of the camp
Whom now I serve—then!—what a deadly blank
For all the comforts of domestic joy
I felt at home!—the royal presence barr'd
By sycophants against the monarch's friends,
Yet that were well! but this unheard-of wrong!
What?—am I grown a savage of the wild
To be thus baited by the last of men,
The rabble of a court?—

Adr. Compose your rage
And take your measures coolly!

Uri. I will find

A passage to the king, or lose myself,—
Soon shall I know, if he allows his friends,
The partners of his glory, to submit
To such a welcome!—was I call'd, my friend!
Among my foes, like Sampson, to make sport
By my blind gambols! I could bear it well—
But, to be hoodwink'd thus among my friends,
Expos'd to all the ridicule and sneer
Of scorners, who would tremble at my frown
Were they to meet me in another field—
This is not to be borne!—thou too, my friend,
Contriv'st to hold the veil upon my eyes,
And keep me blindfold here among the rest!

Adr. Why dost thou stay then in this dangerous place,
Where, to provoke and sting thee into rage,
And make thee do some deed of lunacy
To draw on thee perdition from the king
Is all they wish for? They have miss'd their ends
To lure thee to the snare, and now they try
To rouse thy rage, and drive thee to the toils—
Art thou, like Sampson, blind amongst thy foes?—
Then be a Sampson! pull the fabric down!
And whelm them in the ruin.

Uri. Talk no more
In riddles, but explain!

Adr. Thou seest the hand
Of royalty, extended to protect
The guilty—of thyself they meant to form
An engine, a machine, to cloak their schemes,
And sooth the tongue of obloquy to rest—

—You 'scap'd the snare, and now they doom you dead—
—You ne'er will bear your life to Rabbah's camp—
—But—if you stay
Oh—there is noble vengeance yet in store!
Which not a single voice, nor single arm
Can claim or execute.—Tell your wrongs loud
In Israel's ear, and echo shall reply
From every wood around, where freedom waits
The word to start, and over hill and dale
Pursue the noble chace, till lawless power
Forsakes our happy bounds and breathes her last.

Uri. Thou hast indeed disclosed
An unexpected scene!—and must I be
Either an instrument of private guilt
Or the blind tool of faction? am I made
The trumpet of rebellion, or the flute
That breathes soft peace thro' every royal room
Of guilty courts?—at least, my sovereign lord
Will not deny me justice, which alone
I seek for—but my scandal to proclaim,
To blaze my wrongs before the noontide beam,
Is what the honour of a soldier's name
Or bosom cannot brook!—and must I give
My breath to blow sedition's flame abroad,
And in sad triumph celebrate my wrongs,
With flaming villages and bloody fields,
And devastation and ungovern'd rage?——
No—let me do my duty as becomes
A soldier. I will ne'er be a machine
Of the blind rabble's fury—if the shaft

Of unseen death should meet me by the way,
Sent from my public or my private foes,
Vengeance is heaven's—and what on earth have I,
Or to regret or grieve!—

Adr. That you mistake
My upright meaning, much afflicts thy friend!
—I could discover more!—but thy warm zeal
Perverts whate'er I say!—I much could wish
My doubts unfounded, but I fear for thee—
Consent at least to take a guard of friends
To bring you hence in safety to the camp
(If any sudden mandate should be given,
To haste thy journey in the gloom of night)
For certain treason then shall dog thy heels—
But they shall guard you, and, perhaps, detect
Some mysteries yet untold, whose weight may turn
The scale for freedom in that dubious breast,
And echo from her woodlands shall repeat,
Ten thousand fold, the soul-enliv'ning strain.

Uri. No private wrongs shall make me lend my name
To public mischief—for the rest—my friends
I would not wish endanger'd for my sake—
The law shall right me! or farewel, revenge!

Adr. No danger need be fear'd, but from yourself,
If you too tamely bear such flagrant wrongs—
I'll tell you more, expect me here anon.

[*Exit severally.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

The Palace.

DAVID.

Not yet return'd! 'tis strange! they could not miss
The track, nor would they linger in the chace!—
—The morning dawns, but all is dark within.
Ye solemn glooms! and thou still midnight hour
Whence were your secret hoards of vengeance drawn,
That thus could fire my brain, and people night
With forms, that made me wish for whisper'd tales
Of ambuscades, of massacres, and blood,
To slake the kindling plague that burns within!
—Perhaps they have deserted me, and join'd
The foe! O coward reason! how you reel!—
They have discover'd all, and he returns,
Returns full fraught with vengeance, like a plague,
To breathe his venom round in every breast
Till royalty expires, and David's name,
That us'd to fill the plausive shouts of thousands,
Is breath'd in execration, stamp'd with shame!
I now repent the step, and wish recall'd
The messengers of mercy—never more
Will he consent to pass those guilty gates
Again! perhaps his rash mistaken valour
May deem them blood-hounds, meant to lure him back
To certain fate, and stand on his defence!

But they were far too num'rous to be foil'd!—
Or force or supplication must prevail—
I should have kept him here! My good resolves
Are now the sport of chance! for if he 'scapes,
Not all the world can save him! But, alas!
Should he return, can I endure his look?
Can I endure to see his lovely spouse
Thro' gazing multitudes led to her fate;
Ah no—though shame and ruin should ensue,
I would defy the law, profane the court,
And boldly rescue her, or lose myself!—
He then must fall; for, should he now return,
What plea could I invent to screen my plot
Of death against him? He would still suspect
The man, who once could give him up to fate!—
I know his noble nature—he would scorn
To hold his life on such precarious terms!
Revenge and fear at once would urge him on
To join the faction, and embroil the state!
Had I upon his loyalty rely'd!——
I knew his nature noble and forgiving—
But now, it is too late! and, could I bear
To lose her?—Never—never—tho' the voice
Of thunder call'd her from me!—then farewel
Remorse!—farewel compunction—she is mine!
—But now my palpitating heart informs me
The crisis is at hand—my valiant friend.

ENTER BENAIAH.

Say, are the messengers return'd!

Ben. Not yet;

At least not all.

David. Some dreadful chance, I fear,

Has interven'd. What mean your dubious words

At least not all?

Ben. A direful chance indeed!

The messenger that came has scarce escap'd

With half a life!

David. What sad reverse is this!

How could he cope with odds? or what bold arm

Was join'd with his?

Ben. A numerous band of friends,

Rous'd by some rumour of an ambuscade,

By Joab prepar'd, against his threaten'd life,

Triumphant led him thro' the op'ning gate,

And tend him to the camp! Your messengers

Arriving at this moment, when surmise

Teem'd with intended murders, perfidy

And midnight plots, were deem'd the ruffian train

Combin'd to lay the noble warrior low;

Then all was clamour and misgovern'd rage:

In vain Uriah strove to lay the storm—

Twice fifty levell'd swords at once surround

Your friends, who plead their innocence in vain:

One dar'd to menace vengeance, but the threat
Was fatal to the wretch that gave it breath;
His hapless fellows shar'd his bloody doom,
Save one, whom fav'ring night (tho' wounded sore)
Befriended in his flight; from him was learn'd
The dreadful chance!

David. Then to his doom he goes!—
Fate has him in the snare, and baffles all
Our vain attempts to save him.
O for a winged messenger of Heaven,
To reach the camp at Rabbah, and instil
Unusual pity in the general's mind!—
But they, whose ready ministry of old
Turn'd from my hunted steps the deadly foe,
And render'd me as viewless as themselves,
Have all forsaken me—nor am I left
Alone:—Remorse, and Guilt, and Death, and Shame,
With dragon wing, o'ershade me in their turns;
Their harpy clang severe, and funeral yell,
Proclaim perdition to my trembling soul!

* * * * * * *

Amazement! Nathan here! I thought him fled
For ever from his country, to avoid
The killing sight of an ungrateful child!—
Him, last of all mankind I wish'd to meet!
What terrible tranquillity pervades
His reverend mien, and seems to threat a storm—
Would that were all!—this deadly calm is worse,
Where nought but sense of Heav'n's desertion lives!

To him NATHAN.

David. Prophet, why didst thou thus forsake thy post,
Still deem'd the guardian of thy country's weal?
Nath. The times are not the same! those cares are o'er;
Domestic woes have quench'd the patriot's flame!
No more my bosom kindles at the touch
Of heaven's descending fire! the port is clos'd
That shew'd my ravish'd eyes the splendid view
Of ages yet to come! How soon the veil
May rise, I know not! What the sun beholds
Those aged eyes can see, but boast no more
The power to pierce the midnight-woven gloom
In which the cause and consequence are hid!—
David. This studied ambiguity implies
A meaning, which thy humble words disclaim!
Nath. When such unerring wisdom guides the helm,
Form'd like the diamond in the pregnant mine,
With that deep lustre fraught, those mingling beams
Which angels love to gaze on! when the soul
Reflects heaven's image like the limpid lake,
Smooth, and unruffled, by fell passion's gale;
A private man it much would misbecome
To play the pilot, and usurp the helm
From such consummate guidance.—But for me,
No such ambitious folly taints my views;
Judge by my errand! on a private cause
I come, a suppliant only—With the state

And all its cares, I long have shaken hands,
Content to introduce a poor man's plea
To your indulgent ears—for well I know
Tho' to the dangerous claim of passion deaf—
Tho' to the domineering proud appeal
Of appetite, thou turn'st a heedless ear,
And look'st on sensual spells with cool regard,
Yet wilt thou not contemn the suppliant's prayer!

David. With the known rigour of thy stern rebuke
Such lavish adulation ill accords—
The humble topic of a poor man's plea
Needs no such pompous prelude.—I suppos'd
My known contempt of flattery might suggest
(To thee at least) a manlier mode of speech,
Unless thy words and meaning are at strife.

Nath. I stand corrected, and shall err no more,
Nor mingle with my rough uneven woof
The tissue of the courtier's silken strain!
It suits not with a plain pathetic tale
Of rural violence and village wrongs,
Which thy paternal care shall soon redress,
When known.
When from the bounds of Salem late I past,
Self-exil'd, to avoid domestic woe,
I thought in some sequester'd vale to find
That peace and innocence devoid of guile
Which (though thy bright example beams around)
E'en in those sacred bounds are sought in vain,
A peasant's lodge I sought, whom long I knew,
Of heaven so favour'd in his mean retreat

So sanctify'd, that his æthereal guard
Kept from his lonely cot, at distance due,
All the vain images, the gaudy train
Of Syren forms, (this world's peculiar boast)
That lures the heedless votary from heaven.

David. Could they not guard him from oppressive wrong?

Nath. They saw him wrong'd, and yet th' oppressor lives,
This hermit for my host I rather chose
Than the proud owner of a neighb'ring pile,
Who kept his hospitable gate unclos'd,
With ostentatious welcome to allure
The way-worn pilgrim's foot—But here instead
Of the long retinue, that fills the haunts
Of luxury, and the unmeaning phrase
Of hollow friendship, warm in words alone,
One gentle lamb, his single inmate, play'd
About his joyous hearth, and told a tale
Of warm attachment in its honest looks
And gentle bleatings, far beyond the phrase
Of courtly adulation. This remain'd
The solitary orphan of a flock
Which fell contagion, or the feller gripe
Of lawless usury, had reft away;
The rest, or fill'd the concert of the vales
Which own'd his wealthier neighbour for their lord,
Or bled, by turns, the victims of his board.

David. That wealthy neighbour shall refund his store
If aught of inhumanity appears
Before the judge's tribunal—for soon
It shall be closely sifted—but proceed!—

Nath. A stranger, to the camp of Israel bound,
Of seeming rank, tho' hid in close disguise,
The proud man's hospitality had claim'd;
He spar'd his numerous flocks, and sent his hinds
To rob the hermit of his bleating friend,
The sole associate of his lonely hours.—
I saw it borne away—I mark'd the tears
Of its sad owner, all in vain they fell—
In vain, with supplications he pursu'd
E'en to the proud man's door, his innocent charge—
His whole redress was insult, scorn, and blows.—

David. Now Heaven so deal with me, as he shall reap
The bitter fruit of an unfeeling heart;
And with his forfeit life redeem the land
From such a foul contagion! soon the world
Shall know, I do not bear the sword in vain!

Nath. In thee, my Lord, whose pure, unsullied life
Reflects a glowing transcript of Heaven's laws,
Such rigour is becoming, but to us
Whose feeble optics boast no angel's ken,
The sword of justice dazzles as it strikes—
There needs not such gigantic force to venge
Such petty wrongs.
You know, my Lord! how long the penal sword
Has slumber'd in the sheath, and it might seem
The rigour of severity, at once
To wake its terrors now, for fame would tell
That for a petty wrong, which might be paid
Four fold, a soul was forfeit!

David. Strange to me
It seems, that thou, whose eagle-sight could pry
Beyond the journies of the sun, to view
The late effect that slumber'd in its cause,
Should be dim-sighted here! but time and grief
Have shed a frost upon your faculties,
Else you would see, that famine, sword and fire,
With all the woes that on those furies wait,
Are not so pestilent as that still plague,
That cold, narcotic vapour, worst of ills
With which hell teems, that last result of vice,
When all the virtues, poison'd in their source,
Stagnate at once, and petrify the heart.—
Heavens! what a journey with his fellow fiends
Thro' every devious tract of every crime
This man must first have run, who thus could tear
The fellow-feelings from his savage heart!
His soul is gangren'd, and the sword alone
Can ward the vengeance stor'd above the sky;
Which else, perhaps, would burst upon our heads
In flaming ruin; or the plague might catch
From bosom on to bosom.—He, who dar'd
To seize the lamb, would he have spar'd the child
To join his servile train, or change for gold,
As pride or caprice, or the thirst of gain
Had chanc'd to domineer?

Nath. Yes—or his spouse!

David. Ha!

Nath. THOU ART THE MAN! why does thy cheek turn pale
At thy own semblance? was the mask so foul

As e'en to wake thy rage: and art thou dumb
When thou behold'st the phantom's genuine face?
Thine own most righteous doom has past thy lips
Without recal, and heaven has seal'd the word!
To punish other crimes, were but to prune
The wild luxuriance of a poisonous growth,
While the pernicious root behind remains,
Royal example!

David.—(After a long pause.)

Then thy flight was feign'd,
And thou who seem'd degraded from thy post
As Heaven's own delegate, by Heaven's own hand,
With all thine honours blasted on thy brow,
Return'st with tenfold power, and seem'st to wield
The bolt of vengeance, but thy forward zeal
May be th' effect of petulance; the lamp
Of Heav'n no more may show its light by thee;
Perhaps, 'tis merely to indulge thy spleen,
That thus you dare to thwart me.

Nath. Judge yourself,
When that fell adder, which you foster now,
Such gratitude will show, as you have shown
To Heaven! My son's rebellion, and my flight,
Were mystic warnings to the mental eye
Of tragic scenes to come! Of wild misrule,
And nameless horrors, e'en within those walls
To be committed. These will clear my faith,
And vindicate my name. But who, alas!
Who shall exculpate thee? Thou who wast call'd
From a rude scene of turbulence and blood,

Like yon emerging sun from chaos old,
Th' interpreter of Heaven's benignant will,
From thy bright station to revive the world
With intellectual light! What demon's hand
Has chang'd thee to a comet, worse than they
Who wave their blazing tresses o'er the globe,
Shedding diseases and sidereal blast?
Thou hast, as far as thou hast power, derang'd
The blest designs of Heaven, eclips'd her light
With deep Egyptian darkness, and reduc'd
Her order to confusion! Thou hast given
A louder note to Passion's loudest storm,
And strengthen'd all her pleas! For who that feels
Her mutinous demands, but well may plead
David's example for his worst offence;
David, selected by applauding Heaven,
Her delegate, her prophet, and her priest?—
The faithful husband, of his spouse bereft,
Heart-wounded sires, who mourn the cruel hand
That robb'd his family of all its grace
And comfort, lost at once, shall join to curse
Thy mournful triumphs o'er connubial bliss,
Shall curse thy name, whose magic syllables
Breath'd, as a vile apology for crimes,
Could, like a deep and powerful charm, compose
The loud complaints of conscience!

David. Oh, no more!
Thou rend'st my very heartstrings! I have sinn'd,
Beyond redemption sinn'd. O send in haste
To save Uriah.

Nath. It is now too late.—
E'en should thy messenger in time arrive,
Should the swift mandate reach the general's hand,
It would but hasten brave Uriah's doom,
Such is *his* deadly jealousy of all
That share thy favour, thy solicitude
To save him, would be thought a close design
To hurl *him* from his post, by murther bought,
And fix the hated rival in his room.—
E'en Providence ordains that he shall fall.
Guilt must have all its dreadful consequence,
No single plague of all its ghastly train
Shall lagg behind. The whole Tartarean pomp
Shall march in horror o'er the frighted world,
To shew the perils of beginning vice:
The dreadful admonition else were vain.—
Think not to save him! Thou hast doom'd him dead,
And e'en Omnipotence has seal'd his fate.

David. Is there no means to save him?

Nath. Do you doubt
My mission still? This moment gives a proof
That makes me shudder, while a stronger power
Compells my trembling hand to rend the veil.
See there!

[*Vision of a Man in a mask appears.*

A youth without a name! He boasts thy blood.
Wrapt in unholy musings how he walks!
His eyeballs seek the dust, as if he fear'd
Each glance should tell the fires that burn within,
And soon the dust shall drink his boiling blood,

And vengeance quench the flame!—Stand close, and mark
His dire soliloquy! Nor shalt thou learn
The object of his flame! for Heaven's behest
Must not be stopp'd or thwarted, else the close
Of vice, would want its horrors!—Here he comes.

THE PHANTOM SPEAKS.

Why was I form'd with such impetuous passions?
Oh ill star'd lot of royalty, indulg'd
In every wish! the fuel feeds the flame,
Till, raging past all bounds, it finds its way
Even to the sanctuary! Ye chaste stars!
I must not name her to you! Even my heart
Treacherous, and inconsistent with itself,
At that lov'd name recoils!—yet urges on
My feet to find my doom!—yet, why recoil?
No husband's forfeit blood I mean to shed,
To meet him with a smile, and with a smile
Dismiss him, with the mandate of his fate—
I dare not reach the mark of * Heaven's-belov'd;
My crime is short of murther, tho' beyond
Common adultery! and if Heaven connives
At David's crimes, his complicated guilt,
Why should I doubt of pardon, while my sin
Is secret, nor involves the guilt of blood?
(If pardon be requir'd, and right and wrong,
Perhaps, whatever priestcraft may devise—
Be not the coinage of a statesman's dream)

* Viz. David.

I'll think no more !—the genial feast invites,
I go to drown reflection in the bowl.

David. Who is this monster ? oh disclose his name,
By swift prevention to arrest the course
Of such consummate crimes !

Nath. It cannot be——
He boasts thy blood, and, as thou seest pursues
Thy steps—you err'd from appetite alone,
While he, improving on the royal crimes,
Turns passion into principle, but soon
Vengeance shall cut him short, and lop away
One deadly limb of that malignant plant
Thy crimes have sown in Israel.

David. I adore
Heaven's ways, nor dare to deprecate her wrath !

Nath. But other scenes await thee.—Spectacles
Of wider horror, and more general plagues,
When for one lawless deed a nation mourns ;
And slaughter, fire, and devastation strides
From province into province, led to spoil
By vengeance, vengeance for a monarch's crimes,
Where pure religion and her votaries
Are banish'd from the clime by vice disgrac'd.
Arise ye tribes unborn ! ye future scenes,
Distant, and indistinct in time and place,
Behind the convex of the world conceal'd,
And on the buoyant bosom of the air
Expand your figur'd pomp and meet the eye !—
Far distant from those shores, a warlike race
That mark the wheels of the descending sun,

Shall * see another luminary rise
On their benighted souls, from Salem sent,
From Hermon to Pyrenes distant bourne
Wide flushing o'er the sky. The savage tribe
Shall doff the bloody mail, and bathe their limbs
In pure baptismal waters, where the stream
Of Guadiana laves the fertile fields.—
Long shall their tribes enjoy the deep serene
Of rural bliss, beneath their lords renown'd
Of † Alemannia's old heroic race,
Till peace induces luxury and vice,
The court begins the example, taught by *thee*,
(When thy prophetic eye, that us'd to pierce
Thro' the long vistas of futurity,
Forgot its visions, for th' unholy glance
That led to deeds of darkness and of blood)
The monarch ‡ lets his eye at random rove
After forbidden charms, forgets the tie
Of hospitality, and leaves the sire
To weep at home his violated child ;
His tears are treasured up above ; they fill
The vial of Heaven's vengeance, and come down
In showers of wrath. The raging sire, misled
By the vindictive fiends, ascends the deck,
And to his country's foes a suppliant bends!
See where the reverend senior kneels before
The misbeliever's throne, but not for peace,

* Conversion of the Spaniards to Christianity.

† The Gothic settlers in Spain.

‡ Roderic, the Goth, whose seduction of Count Julian's daughter occasioned the invasion of Spain by the Moors.

For mercy he implores not, but demands
The congregated furies of the south,
Fire, sword, and famine, to revenge his wrongs.
See! where they scowl across the midland main,
And meditate their prey, and mount the wind!
A living cloud of mischiefs, worse than those
"Which Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
"Brought up and darken'd all the land of Nile."

The Vision of a Royal Court appears.

The King on his Throne, and his Nobles attending.

ENTER A SUPPLIANT, AND KNEELS.

To thee, dread sovereign of an hundred thrones,
Who sees the swarthy sons of Lybia bend
Before thee, and canst bid their headlong zeal
Sweep o'er the subject nations, or subside,
Like the wild hurricanes that rage or sleep
At the great bidding of the power who rules
The kingdom of the winds: if ever zeal
In thy great *prophet's cause thy sabre drew,
If e'er the wrongs of yon proud †Nazarenes
Enflam'd your rage, oh! seize the golden hour,
That zeal and vengeance sanctify at once,
Or sleep for ever! Now the martial fife
No more accords the measur'd march; no more
The trumpet's clang awakes the levied horde,

* Mahomet. † Christians so called by the Saracens.

But o'er the blasted laurels of their groves
Vice curls her reptile tendrils, and consumes
The vital sap, that nurs'd the vig'rous stem!—
The king repays the hospitable rite
With violence and wrong! His nobles view
His mad career in heartless apathy,
Or join his deadly orgies! What remains,
But up—and give the victim to the sword.
Nature is burden'd with the hated race,
And Heaven's own ministers that ride the clouds,
To all the winds proclaim the harvest ripe.
Go borrow Time's keen scythe, and lend its edge
To Devastation's hand; the reverend sire
Will shake his hoary locks with joy to see
His task of ages in one glorious day
Perform'd, then everlasting Righteousness
Will look from Heav'n, and bless the rising flame
That lays the temples of Gomorrah low!
Seek ye an hostage? take my life in pledge,
If I should fail on yonder hated coast
To give you ample means to plant your power,
And bid the Mauritanian stem extend
Its boughs luxuriant o'er the conquer'd land!

King. Fathers! attend the summons! Heaven itself
Calls us to conquest, and o'er haughty Spain
Our prophet's name to raise, our hallow'd arms
Are cover'd o'er with dust, and want a cause
To furbish them anew. Shall narrow seas
Oppose *their* march, whom Barca's burning sand

Withheld not, burning fiercer in pursuit
Of glory? think, for every added realm
A double weight of glory waits above
To every one, whose arms have lent their aid
To this victorious cause.* Begin the vote.

The Prospect changes to an invaded Country—Cities in Flames—Peasants Massacred, &c. &c.

Nath. Behold the fruit of thy luxurious hours,
The sequel of thy fond Elysian dreams!
That king who dar'd to violate the laws
Of sacred hospitality and friendship,
Bred in religion's pure and sacred rites,
Had never dar'd to brave the flaming bolt,
Nor cope with Heaven's dread edict, hadst not thou
Marshall'd the way before! contemplate now
The dreadful harvest which thy hand has sown;
How far beyond thy hopes, and let thy heart
Weep blood, if yet the fount of tears be dry,
Uriah too might have embroil'd the state,
And with rebellion's shrill sonorous trump
Publish'd his wrongs, and call'd the tribes to arms,
But nobly he refus'd—thou little knowest
What a defender you have flung away,
If e'er sedition's flag shall crown thy towers,
If e'er the desart, thro' its lonely bounds
Shall joy to see its exile's steps return!†

* Viz. The cause of Mahomet.

† Viz. David, who afterwards was expelled from Jerusalem by his son Absalom.

I see thine agony, and for relief
Of thy soul's torture, to another scene
Direct thy charmed eyes, thou hast beheld
The dark complexion of thy deeds outdone
By Heaven's profest disciple, blest with rays
Of Heaven's peculiar brightness :—how he curst
The beam, and like an adder slunk away
To mingle with his kindred glooms, incenst
To feel the sacred light pervade his soul!
Now view a warrior, whose benighted eyes
Roll'd round in vain to find that heavenly ray
Vouchsafed to that IBERIAN King—whose lips
The living waters from the hallow'd fount
Never bedew'd, yet, (dubious as he stands
Upon the trembling verge of life and death,
Whether the yawning grave shall close for ever
His prospect, or the conscious mind survive
To endless raptures, or incessant woes)
He minds not passions call, he spurns away
The snares of appetite that cross his path
And court him to relax the stubborn nerve
Of steel'd exertion, the seraphic forms
Of GOOD and FAIR, altho' by glimpses caught,
Hurry him thro' the phalanx of his foes
And bid him scatter all their adverse bands
Like fire, ascending thro' th' incumbent mass
Of some embowel'd hill. It burst abroad
All glorious, and the cloudy face of night
Paints with aspiring flame, and vollied hail
Of mimic stars!

The Prospect changes to a Camp, Military Trophies, &c. The General seated as if to receive an Embassy.— A Train of Suppliants approaching at a distance.

Behold the noble youth,
Clad in the robe of conquest where he sits,
While all the breathing minstrelsy of war
Sound his transcendent name from earth to heaven
He minds them not !——
Could you but see the conflict in his soul,
You still would tremble for him.—Such a form
Has lighted up a fever in his blood
That he seems something less, or more than man.
If aught but death or his warm wish enjoy'd
Can work the cure ! Behold the matchless maid
By vows another's—yet in person free—
Then judge and ponder how a Gentile breast
Can turn th' artillery of such charms aside.

David. Oh Heaven's ! all other mortal forms to this
Are fleeting vapours, unsubstantial air—
Or beauty ne'er was seen by me before,
Or she surpasses all the beauteous kind—
His virtue, if he can resign such charms,
Exceeds the human pitch.

Nath. You soon will judge,
He seeks not, for he knows not Heaven's support,
There be, who know its value and who seek it,
Then spurn it from them when they need it most.

THE GENERAL SPEAKS.*

O dear-bought laurels! would to Heaven my fall
Had grac'd that fatal day on which my shield
Guarded a father's head! He sleeps in peace;
But, oh illustrious shade! if thou beholdst
The struggles of thy son, support his spirit.
If thou canst reach the source of heavenly light,
Oh! steal one beam of intellectual day,
And chace the demons who besiege the mind!
Tell me! oh tell me, do they whisper peace?
Shall I obey them?—or, can I survive
The pangs of separation from the maid
Who lives in every nerve, in every pulse?
Yet honour calls to leave her! should I scorn
The mandate? should I tear her from that heart†
That owns a mutual flame, could I survive
My honour? could I bear to hear my name
Traduc'd, and level'd with the common herd,
The sport of every passion? I might teach
Her heart to swerve from duty! I might lure
Her yielding mind astray, by potent bribes
Of Roman dignity: but Roman honour
Forbids the thought. Let punic souls obey
Each gust of passion! let majestic Rome
Subdue the world, by shewing how it can
Subdue itself the first! I must not taint

* Scipio Africanus. † Viz. Her betrothed lover

My country's fame amongst barbarian tribes
By tyranny and rapine, tho' by laws
Of conquest sanctify'd.—It must not be.—
Suffer I must! but let me feel for him
Who, should I fail my passion to subdue,
Must sink beneath the pangs of hapless love!
It must be conquer'd!—Rome's immortal cause,
The common sympathy of man to man,
And reason all demand it. But they come!—
Be still my heart, and honour bear me thro'!

[*The Suppliants appear.*

Sons of Iberia! let my present purpose
Shew you, that, not by thirst of conquest led,
Nor universal sway, the Roman arms
Have met th' insulting * foe of liberty
Half way in Spain, and drove him baffled home.
It was instead of violence and wrong,
To substitute the fair and equal ties
Of stedfast equity and common faith.
These, these alone the Roman's wish to leave
The trophies of their arms! by these to rule
And claim the empire o'er the willing heart!
They scorn dominion o'er obsequious slaves
Who tremble at the rod, and hold their being
On the frail tenure of a despot's breath;
They wish their allies men, to rank with men,
The children of one parent, justly deem'd
The friends of Rome, and worthy of her cause,

* The Carthaginians.

And I will purchase them with such a gem
As the sun seldom views.

[*Goes into a Pavilion, and returns with a young Princess.*

Behold her here
Whom long as lost ye mourn'd! I might have kept
This treasure for myself, and shipt to Rome
The glorious prize, nor fear'd the taint of blame:
I might have still preserv'd the world's esteem,
But I had lost my own!—I found her heart
Devoted to another; with that heart
Her hand shall go! and know, I more exult
In this self-conquest, than to climb the car
Of triumph, o'er the whole assembled world,
With Carthage at their head! To thee, brave prince,
By love of right impell'd, this royal maid
I freely give. Receive her as thine own,
And with it Rome's respect and warm esteem.

[*Prospect closes.*

Nath. Ponder this scene! then weigh with equal hand
The Gentile, and Believer, then reflect
Whence flow'd the continence of one, and whence
That wild misrule that madden'd in the mind
Of that misguided king, and woke the storm
That wreck'd his country's peace, then ask yourself
If meddling zeal inspir'd my just reproof.

[*Exit* Nathan.

David. Was there not shame enough to sink my soul
In the dark gulph of absolute despair?

But horror too and grief must add their weight ?
Yet they are welcome !—cover me, deep night !
Ten thousand fathom down, where never more
The blessed beam of Heaven shall visit me ;
Where never winged minister of hers
Thorough the dismal gloom shall wing his flight
To look on my sad fall, and turn away
With deep abhorrence !—but what midnight shade
Can hide me from myself ! What curtain fall
Between the piercing beam of torturing thought
And its sad object ? Yet, how gentle that
To what this instant I perceive within—
This sense of desolation—Heavenly hate,
This dead vacuity, this gloom of being !
This settled sorrow of the swelling heart,
By which alone I feel that I exist !—
Where shall I find him, where, the friendly power
Tho' arm'd with vengeance ? yet I wish to feel him,
And own the father in his dread correction.
Father of mercy ! let me own once more
Thy presence, tho' it blast me ! turn again
Thy aspect, tho' incenst, on thy fallen son,
And let me feel thy pity in the scourge
That wounds to heal !—far, far around I look
Amid the tossing of this mental storm.
Yet see no dawning of that welcome light—
Sign of returning peace ! it is but just
That I should wander in eternal gloom,
For wilfully on heaven's benignant beam

I shut my eyes, and chose to grope my way
To swift perdition with a demon guide.

To HIM, ZADOK.

From him, whom never yet desponding soul
Address'd in vain, I come, but not with peace,
Nor soothing promise, long the storm must rage,
The dashing rain descend, and deluge spread,
Ere with the olive branch the dove returns.
Thy soul has lost its vigour—all its powers
Are run to waste, its energy is gone—
Extinct, by foul voluptuous charms exhal'd:
This to recover, needs strong discipline
Effective, lasting, till its energy
Recovers in the conflict, like the spark
From stricken steel, or winter's fire, compress'd
To tenfold ardour by the rigorous grasp
Of Winter's frory hand.—This is Heaven's will,
Her primal law, by most effectual means
To keep that sacred, active power awake,
In which th' excellency of mind consists.
If this be dissipated in the calm
Of sensual life, or if, in sloth relaxt,
The faculties lie slumb'ring—then he calls
His ministers—fierce pain, the alarm of war,
Domestic grief, adversity's stern march
And quiver'd woes. They rouse the torpid mind,
Hunt her thro' all her feelings, till she rise
From her terrene, and most inglorious laire,

And Heaven-ward looks again, asserts her birth,
Puts forth her pinions, vindicates the skies,
And leaves the worldly dim eclipse behind;
But, if those fail, the gangrene is begun
That leads to swift perdition.

David. Heaven forbid
Such means should fail! Oh let the discipline
Be sharp enough! I shrink not, tho' it leave
My trembling nerves all bare! welcome! affliction
I bless your friendly frowns, to my sick soul
More cheering than the Syren smiles that led
My wand'ring feet astray. Your awful march
And funeral ensigns, seen afar, I hail!
Print not your footsteps lightly in the dust,
For every vagrant gale to waft away
The traces of your visitation dread!
But leave a deep, indelible path behind,
As when the avenger of his people's sins
Treads the red wine-press in his jealous rage,
And stamps his vengeance deep—but me alone
Visit, nor let my people share my woes!

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

DRAMATIC POEM

OF

THE ROYAL MESSAGE.

THE introduction of the character of popular delegates in the foregoing drama, is founded on the representation of the Jewish government, as given by HARRINGTON and others. According to them, though it was first a theocracy, (or a government immediately under the divine legislature) the laws were, however, submitted to the people for their adoption or rejection. By this is not meant that they were submitted to the people at large, but to chosen delegates elected * in rotation.

In proportion as they degenerated, and, in consequence, forfeited in some degree the divine protection, the theocracy became a mere republic. This form of government, though extolled by Harrington, and his followers, yet seems, even in the case of the Israelites (which he adduces as one of the most convincing examples in its favour) to have laboured under one considerable defect. Under this latter change at least, the EXECUTIVE power was so feeble, that a monarchy was become absolutely necessary for their subsistence as a society, for as †*there was no king in Israel, every one did that which was right in his own eyes*; this is an observation made by the sacred historian, after the account of a very flagrant outrage, which was punished, indeed, tho' not by the hand of the magistrate, but by a bloody war, and almost the total extermination of the obnoxious tribe.

The friends of the republican form of government cannot, therefore, make any inference in favour of that system, from the example of the Jewish Commonwealth, unless indeed they can shew, that when they

* Judges, 21. 2 † See 1 Chron. 13, and Harrington, in loco

were properly a republic, the laws were regularly put in execution.—Arguments drawn from their anterior state, as a theocracy, when they were immediately governed by the dictates of Omnipotence, and entitled to his favour, are foreign to the question. In this *degenerate* state, therefore, a royal governor seems to have been necessary, in order to preserve them, as a nation, from anarchy. The objection made by SAMUEL * to a kingly government is, I know, sometimes adduced as an argument against the monarchical form. But it appears, not that SAMUEL preferred the republican, but the theocratical form of government to the monarchical. Indeed, that ever they were what is called a pure commonwealth, seems a supposition of republican writers, ingeniously, but infirmly supported. The design of their ancient prophet seems to have been, to reclaim them to their ancient obedience, in order to entitle them once more to that degree of the divine protection which they had forfeited. If they ever were a republic, it was found that they could not subsist as one; their government was therefore changed into something like a limited monarchy: at least, it appears that some new laws or regulations were, from time to time, proposed to the delegates of the people,† in the rejection of Adonijah, and the election of Solomon, the business was certainly carried by the popular vote, as under the old theocracy.

It is natural to suppose that in this stage, a sufficient portion of the old popular spirit would remain to make the people, or their delegates, watchful over their privileges, and jealous of the royal prerogative.—At the coincidence of a bloody foreign war, with great relaxation of morals in the court, and a flagrant example of criminality in the monarch, the popular faction would have (as they thought) a plausible pretext for innovation, or probably for restoring the ancient royal family. The existence of such a faction is proved from sacred history, and its progress and fortunes described at large.†

The author, however, of the foregoing drama, does not presume to decide on what form of government was adopted by the Jews in their transition from a theocracy to monarchy, as the point has been much disputed: the authorities produced by both sides, and the points they

* Chron. 29. 22. † 2 Sam. 20.

agree in, seem a sufficient basis for such a slight poetical superstructure as he has ventured to erect. To the generality of readers, he hopes, he need not apologize for an amplification of the story of Uriah; the best apology he perhaps can make is, that the subject was recommended to him by a gentleman of distinguished genius and taste,* whose liberality in encouraging others to enter on the same paths he has pursued himself with so much success, is as uncommon as his abilities. The story itself must be owned to be highly instructive and interesting. The author imagined it might be rendered still more so, by endeavouring to mark the commencement and trace the progress of guilt in the principal character, and to bring into view some of its consequences, within such limits as the unity of the subject would admit. How far he has succeeded in the conduct, the sentiments, and delineation of character, is not for him to determine. It is not the intention, however, of the author, to let it rest under the load of imputations that are not justly due. It has imperfections enough of its own to answer for. It is necessary, therefore, that he should account for the following sentiments in the character of ACHITOPHEL, which at first sight seem highly objectionable. Where he is introduced as pleading to David the necessity of Uriah's death, from reasons of state, he adds the following argument:

†Dost thou not wish the obstacle remov'd
By any safe expedient?—search thy heart!
—Examine well within!—I know thou dost?—
But Heaven, that marks the movements of the mind,
In equal balance weighs the guilty thought
And guilty deed. Already is thy soul
Deep ting'd with blood in Heaven's impartial eye,
And sentence past already! What remains
But give th' imperial mandate—and it's o'er?
One act of penitence atones for all, &c.

This was introduced with a design of exposing a sophistical argument which has often, it is to be feared, afforded something like a tacit patronage to vice.

* William Preston, Esq.

† Act 4. Scene 3.

Of this doctrine, that the criminal *intention* and the *deed* itself are equally culpable, advantage has been taken by the libertine in private, and more openly by a certain species of fanatics; the former pleads it to himself, to palliate his enormities, the others make public use of it in order to support their peculiar dogmas. The first pleads, as an excuse for his licentiousness, the infirmity of human nature; the others assert, that man has come out of the hands of his Maker, or has made himself, so complete an adept in depravity, a machine so skilfully wound up for mischief, that he cannot endeavour to assist his neighbour but he offends his Maker; that his very best actions entitle him to celestial vengeance; that when conscience approves his seeming good actions, it is guilty of a pernicious fraud, for good works, *as such*, entitle a person to *damnation!** This, 'tis true, puts an end at once to all moral distinctions, and that old, exploded doctrine of the rule of right, and the unalterable fitness of things, concerning which Clarke and Cudworth have given themselves so much useless trouble. But it tends to promote the more commodious doctrine of salvation by faith alone, supernatural assurances of election or adoption, a much more comfortable opinion than that old troublesome notion of the necessity of a thorough reformation in heart and life!

An inattentive perusal of a declaration of our Saviour's, in the Sermon on the Mount, has given to some a seeming sanction to this opinion, *that the intent and act are equally culpable*; the words are well known, "*Whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" It it observeable, that the guilt is not mentioned in general, but the degree of it is ascertained with a mathematical accuracy, (if one may be allowed the expression) by the very words *in the heart.*" These undoubtedly were meant to distinguish it as inferior to guilt in *act*. This interpretation seems supported by that remarkable expression in another part of the gospel, *out of the heart proceed adulteries, murthers, &c.* This expression, set

* See Wesley's last Sermon, with Mr. Vicars's Remarks. This doctrine seems to have arisen (for it is not novel) from a misconception of a passage in Thomas Aquinas, where that acute schoolman enumerates, with scientific precision, the several ingredients of a good action, any of which being detracted, the action changes its nature of course. See a debate on this subject, in Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent, B. 2.

in contradistinction to the former, seems to indicate a superior degree of guilt. The communication of moral contagion to the mind of another, must, even in the eye of Reason, be a more flagrant enormity, at least, it must be more pernicious to society than a criminal propensity, which is confined to a solitary bosom, and makes a progress visible only to the eye of Omnipotence.

The solemnity with which the great author of our religion points out the turpitude of the first criminal conception, may seem too great for the occasion—but the expression he uses does not denote a transient temptation, but the guilt of one, who deliberately, and contrary to his known duty, takes his station in the precincts of danger,* and fixes his mind intensely on the forbidden object. To those who credit revelation, and are conscious that the indulgence of criminal propensities render us objects of aversion to superior rational beings, the representation in the text will carry sufficient conviction. To such as consider the dangerous encroachment of the possions, and the misery they occasion, when Reason relaxes its government, the caution will appear highly necessary. The philosopher, who examines only the intellectual and active powers of the mind, will allow the danger of such indulgences, even when confined to thought, when he considers their baneful influence on the reasoning powers. One of the principal duties of man, as a rational creature, is to exercise his judgment, to weigh things present with things to come, to look beyond the object that solicits his immediate attention, to its remote consequences, and determine as reason directs. By this exercise his rational powers attain a daily addition of strength and activity. Imagination cannot at present form any adequate notion of that comprehension of mind, which probably, in a future state of existence, will be the result of an habitual exercise and improvement of *this* faculty, suppose we at present take no more of human nature into our view. The self-command, which must necessarily be the concomitant of such an exertion, must give the intellectual faculty additional strength in every stage of its progress.

Let us now reverse the telescope, and figure to ourselves in what a

* Βλεπει looketh upon with continued attention.

mean and degrading point of view a rational being must appear to superior natures, when it suffers its faculties not only to be clouded with passion, but contracted, enfeebled, and perverted from their original destination!—Such a mind must have lost even the power of exerting its first operation over its own notions. It cannot appreciate the value of such objects as fall under its observation. It has lost the power of comparing its own ideas, for it is so inviolably attached to *one*, that it cannot carry its view so far, as to contemplate another in a comparative view. It is not easily conceived how the range of such a person's ideas can be much more extensive than those of the mere animal creation. Yet to such a deplorable state even of the reasoning faculties, the indulgence of any one inordinate desire unavoidably tends, if not controlled in due season. With time the difficulty must increase in proportion to the necessity of recovering what one may call the elasticity of the mind, and of repelling, at the same time, the insurgence of the passions. So just, even in a philosophical point of view, is our Saviour's representation of the turpitude and danger of the first, deliberate reception of a criminal train of thought.

FINIS.

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ERRATA.

Page	Line	
12	7,	after or, insert a comma.
19	3,	for lose r. loose.
24	20,	for draught r. charm.
25	9,	for no r. not.
29	13,	r. sport.
Do.	18,	r. descry'd.
31	2,	r. AGDISTES.
Do.	10,	for plain r. field.
33	18,	for forming r. fuming.
34	3,	dele the comma after main.
Do.	6,	r. Fauns.
40	21,	for Mephitic read Mephitis.
42	14,	after attire insert a semicolon instead of the comma.
49	18,	this is a too literal version of an expression in Homer, which escaped notice in the revision, the two last lines had been better thus:
		Our chief, who ne'er disastrous hour
		Had known, till these damp plagues were seen above to lour.
50	12,	after stem, insert a comma.
Do.	15,	r. Tartarean.
52	21,	for will r. wile.
65	6,	after excursive insert a comma, and after play'd a colon.
67	27,	after Eumolpus insert a comma.
68	2,	insert a colon after disguise.
69	6,	Insert a comma after arms.
Do.	19,	r. Phocis! weep!
Do.	20,	r. Castalia's rill!
72	1,	insert a comma after stripling.
73	9,	insert a comma after severe.
75	13,	for auburn r. hauberk.
Do.	22,	r. doom.
78	19,	r. in arms" the chiefs.
79	4,	for wary r. weary.
Do.	10,	for they r. the.
Do.	25.	after winter dele semicolon and insert a comma.
82	14,	for yok'd r. pil'd.
82	24,	insert a comma after near.
84	6,	for lambent fire r. lovely choir.
86	1,	insert a comma after encampment.
Do.	2,	for sleep r. sloth.
90	6,	r. ruffian, seiz'd.
Do.	15,	r. livid.
91	13,	r. lurid.
97	22,	r. each, apart,
Do.	24,	for himself r. *himself*.
99	16,	r. Cupid.
109	5,	insert a comma after pomp.
110	21,	for knew r. know.
120	19,	insert a comma after and, and another after slope.
126	28,	dele comma after expelled, and insert a semicolon.
148	5,	the inverted commas from this line to 149, 9, were inserted by a mistake of the compositors.
154	12,	for hurls r. hurl.
159	2,	read lover.
174	9,	for where r. were.
186	20,	dele the period after spent.
196	10,	insert a comma after entity.
202	6,	r. haste you, chieftain!
217	26,	read Circæan.
219		for art that charms, r. charm that sways.
234	13,	Note---dele he.
236	8,	for the r. its
Do.	24,	for her r. his.
239	19,	for when r. where.
258	29,	for a r. and.
260	2,	Note---for terribi r. terribil
265		Add to the title, Trinity College, Dublin.
270	20,	r. fire.
279	4, 5,	r. feast; When, &c.
303	3,	r. Deva's.

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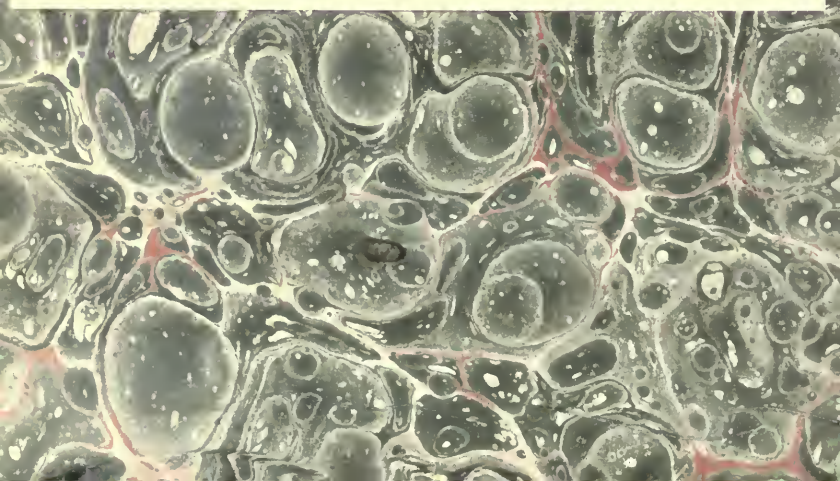

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